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SEARJEAN
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urmoil

Office
eats
on with
crisis

WORKS

ARBY

LEFT AND WHITE

Does every writer in England really vote Labour?
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WIN A HOLIDAY AWAY

You could set off for a break in Amsterdam this evening
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20P

THE TIMES



No. 65,220 TUESDAY MARCH 21 1995

Tokyo toll is six dead and 3,300 hurt

Religious cult suspected of gas attacks

By GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

HUNDREDS of detectives were drafted into the search for terrorists who released nerve gas on the Tokyo subway during the rush hour yesterday, killing six and injuring more than three thousand people.

The mass poisoning was thought to be the work of a group because of the synchronisation of the attacks on railway carriages and platforms along three busy lines of the underground network. No motive was apparent, but suspicion fell mainly on a religious sect which has been accused of involvement in another gassing last June which left seven people dead.

In both cases the terrorists used sarin, a gas developed by the Nazis and subsequently used by Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war.

Inhaling half a milligram of the gas is enough to kill an eight-stone person almost instantly and it induces symptoms including impaired vision, vomiting, headache and breathing difficulties.

Nazi stockpiles were largely disposed of after the Second World War, but America had about four million litres stored in Germany until the 1980s and Middle Eastern countries are known to have produced it in recent years. Making the gas, a phosphorous compound, would require degree-level chemical expertise and access to the various intermediate products.

The end product is, however, said to be so unstable that chemical warfare experts say only demented terrorists would use it. "This is some-



A soldier in anti-gas gear goes into the subway

thing for the crazies. Only terrorists with a kamikaze mentality would use it," one German expert said.

In yesterday's attack, passengers reported seeing men with surgical masks and sunglasses leaving lunchbox-sized packets on the subway system in what officials described a deliberate, indiscriminate act of murder.

The Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, called an emergency cabinet meeting saying the attack would not be tolerated, adding: "I can't deplore this act strongly enough."

By last night more than 3,300 people had been treated for the effects of the poisoning and about 740 were kept in hospital overnight. Sixteen were said to be in a critical condition.

Sarin gas has been used in at least two other incidents in the past year. The first was in

the city of Matsumoto last June when sarin fumes spread through a densely populated area, killing seven and injuring at least fifty. Then in March this year, more than eighty passengers on a train in Yokohama complained of nausea, stinging eyes and sore throats. Investigators said that their symptoms were identical to those of the Tokyo victims and they believed the Yokohama attack could have been a practice run for the mass poisoning yesterday.

While police have declined to identify possible suspects or motives, commentators have speculated that the 1,000-strong religious sect Aum Shinrikyo - which predicts the end of the world in 1997 - may have been involved. Traces of sarin were reported to have leaked from the sect's headquarters in a remote village in central Japan in January, and police investigating kidnappings and intimidation of former members have raided several of the group's branch offices recently. The latest raid was on Sunday and the sect has filed a 20 million yen lawsuit against the police for unlawfully entering its premises and seizing documents.

The sect has also taken legal action against several media organisations over reports of the sarin leak. It claims that it has been the target of sarin gas attacks by "hostile forces" and denied any involvement in the poisonings yesterday.

Police raid, page 10
Ride through hell, page 14
Tech terror, page 16



The Queen chats to corgi owners who welcomed her on the Cape Town waterfront at the start of her visit yesterday

The Queen praises South Africa's 'miracle'

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN CAPE TOWN

SOUTH AFRICA's transition from apartheid to democracy was little short of a miracle and a shining example to the world, the Queen told the country's parliament yesterday at the start of her state visit - the first since her father addressed the same House in 1947.

After a standing ovation and African ululations from the public gallery, the Queen told an almost full house of politicians of all shades, headed by President Mandela, that her wish to return to South Africa after accompanying George VI on his post-war tour had never deserted her during the country's half century of turmoil and tragedy.

In a speech which paid warm tribute to Mr Mandela and Deputy President de Klerk for taking the key steps on the road to reconciliation, the Queen quoted from the memoirs of Mr Mandela, to whom she awarded the Order of Merit, the highest decoration in her gift. In the memoirs, he wrote that it did not make sense for both sides to lose thousands of lives in an unnecessary conflict, and that it was time to talk. "I wish that more people the world over would heed those wise words," she said.

"They typify the new South Africa which is showing that, with far-sighted, able leadership, willingness to compromise and patient determination in the quest for peace, it is possible to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable."

Earlier, 30 of the country's finest corgis greeted the Queen. She appeared extremely pleased when the Cape Welsh Corgi Club arranged for the dogs to parade on Cape Town waterfront.

Thousands cheer, page 12
Diary, page 16
Leading article, page 17

Aids dentist on register

Vikram Advani, a dentist suffering from Aids, was allowed to stay on the dental register for six months after the profession's regulators refused to investigate allegations of his illness. The General Dental Council knew that he was being treated three months before he died, it emerged yesterday. Page 2

Labour looks at tax on child benefit

The Labour leadership is seriously considering plans to tax child benefit at 40 per cent where either parent is a top-rate taxpayer, as part of a big shake-up of the welfare state. Senior Shadow Cabinet members reject taxing basic rate taxpayers. Page 2

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Clarke accuses the Right of undermining sterling

By PHILIP WEBSTER, JILL SHERMAN AND WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU

KENNETH CLARKE heightened Conservative tensions yesterday by accusing his enemies on the party's right of undermining sterling.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer hit back at right-wing attempts to isolate him and harm his future leadership prospects as the Government faced up to another cliffhanger vote today on Europe.

Speaking in Brussels, the Chancellor linked Conservative divisions on Europe with the recent turbulence on the foreign exchange markets which has seen the pound fall to record lows against the German mark. He said Conservative supporters and the public were "sick and tired" of endless disputes over Europe.

The Right hit back immediately last night after a 92 Group meeting. One leading figure said: "It is ludicrous of him to blame us for undermining the pound. It was his speech over Europe a few weeks ago that upset the

appliance." Mr Clarke's retort to a charge from the Thatcherite Conservative Way Forward group that he was "out on a limb" came as other ministers leapt to his defence and denied that he was at odds with the rest of the Cabinet. Mr Clarke dismissed his critics as a fringe group.

At the same time, Michael Heseltine warned MPs against falling victim to a "death wish" and told rebels that they were building barriers to victory at the next election by giving the impression of disunity.

Jeremy Hanley, the Conservative Party chairman, called for party unity and pointedly told Sir George Gardiner, chairman of the 92 Group and editor of the Conservative Way Forward magazine, in which the attack on Mr Clarke was made, to unite with all Conservatives "against the real enemy" rather than make points "that are not only unhelpful but sterile".

Before the 92 Group meeting last night some right-wingers had voiced criticism of Sir George for having reignited the Euro dispute on which a Cabinet truce has held for weeks. The Chancellor is understood to have escaped criticism, though there were calls for tax cuts and warnings against any move to the centre.

Some members of the group criticised Sir George over the timing of the attack on Mr Clarke, and some said that there were difficulties in his joint role as chairman of the group and editor of the magazine. "The 92 group is being tarred with the Conservative Way Forward brush," one said.

Mr Clarke, in Brussels for a meeting of European finance ministers, said Cabinet policy on Europe was "perfectly clear" and rejected claims that

Continued on page 2, col 6

Peter Riddell, page 8

Former prisoner awarded £500,000

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER prisoner has won £500,000 in damages from the Home Office for brain injury sustained when he was given six times the normal dose of methadone while on remand in Brixton jail.

Martin Rogers, a former heroin addict, was awarded the money in an out-of-court settlement believed to be the biggest by the Prison Service.

He suffers severe memory loss and walks with a crutch and walking stick as a result of the huge overdose almost nine years ago. It is understood he was prescribed the correct amount of methadone, but was given the wrong dosage.

Mr Rogers, a former greengrocer from Hoxton in east London, lay most of the night on his cell floor and was not found until the next morning. He had been transferred from Wormwood Scrubs, where he had been remanded on a charge of causing grievous bodily harm with intent, after being arrested for attacking a man with an axe. He was

prescribed the methadone to treat his heroin addiction.

A Prison Service spokeswoman said yesterday: "We have paid £500,000 in an out-of-court settlement after admitting liability for negligence in administering methadone."

Mr Rogers, 32, was in a coma in King's College Hospital for nine months, and according to his wife, Jacqui, twice "died". After coming out of coma, he spent 12 months in a wheelchair before starting to walk using crutches. He said: "I am disabled for the rest of my life. I cannot remember things. I just sit at home all day watching television. I am bored stiff most of the time."

The award comprises damages for brain damage, sterility, the cost of long-term care, loss of potential earnings and the purchase of a home that will have to be fitted with special features.

Mrs Rogers said no amount of money could compensate for what her husband had suffered while in Brixton jail.

Fraud and shady cash deals led to envoy's suicide

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

A TALE of fraud, backhanders, black market currency dealing and illegal visas, set against a background of civil war, resulted in the suicide of a British diplomat and the enforced retirement of two ambassadors.

The Evelyn Waugh-style story emerged yesterday when Sir John Coles, head of the Foreign Accounts Committee to the Public Accounts Commission on corruption in the British Embassy in Sanaa, the Yemeni capital. Astonished MPs heard that Ger-

ald Ryan, 48, second secretary in Sanaa, had been arrested in February last year on suspicion of false accounting and theft over five years. He committed suicide on Christmas Eve.

The police told the Foreign Office last month they would have suggested that he should be charged with theft, deception and corruption. The cost to the public purse has been estimated at £41,000, although Ryan told the police he had profited by about £100,000.

Sir John told MPs that Ryan had also issued visas with no fee recorded. That could have resulted in "up to ten" Sudanese illegal immigrants entering

Britain. There was also circumstantial evidence that currency transferred between the embassy's sterling and local currency accounts had been manipulated with a potential for profiteering of £600,000 to £700,000. Yemen has officially recognised multiple currencies, leaving much scope for black market trading.

There was no evidence that Ryan had been involved, although a Mr al-Duais, a locally engaged accountant, was implicated: he went on leave in June 1993 and never returned. The Foreign Office has asked the Yemeni authorities to bring criminal charges

against him. The Foreign Office is also looking at whether there is a case for disciplinary action against other staff.

While this was going on, civil war raged in Yemen and two ambassadors left under a cloud, although there was no suggestion that either was involved in malpractice. Mark Anthony Marshall, ambassador since 1988, was told to leave the service early in 1993 accused of "appalling management". He was succeeded by Douglas Gordon, who was asked to take early retirement last month after he, too, was told his management was not good enough.

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Missed opportunity to catch rising stars

These days, only knife-edge votes. Prime Minister's Questions and the occasional well-trailed "dash" in the Commons excite much press attention. Questions come between 2.30pm and 3.30pm; after these there may be a topical statement or an outburst during Points of Order, but by 4.30 reporters have drifted out.

Most MPs have drifted out, too. Backbenchers realise that routine debates will be reported "straight", if at all. Commentators know better places to find stories, slants, leaks, gossip and guidance as to what the big political guns are thinking. Corridors, lobbies and lunch are where the

news is made. To put it bluntly, between 5pm and the ten o'clock vote, the Chamber is seldom the place to be.

Yet it matters. This is the skidpan where ministers and Opposition spokesmen are shaping up for not so advanced Drivers. At key political moments the possession (or absence) of the skills on display every afternoon will still make and break careers. Commons watchers can all think of examples of supposed "rising stars", tipped by political analysts for the highest offices, whom we were not surprised (but the analysts were amazed) to see careering off the road and into the ditch. They may have impressed at lunch, but they



MATTHEW PARRIS

POLITICAL SKETCH

were feeble on their feet. Around 4.30 yesterday afternoon, with Questions over and the Press Gallery almost empty, I wandered in. The occasion, though ill-attended, mattered: the Second Reading of the new Child Support Bill.

Two of the most important men in British politics were locking horns. Neither are household names. Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, was named in one poll as the least-recognised Cabinet Minister in Britain.

Donald Dewar, his Shadow, is surely one of the ablest of Labour's front bench, yet utterly untelevisual. In a few years he may well be Foreign Secretary, Chancellor, or Scottish Secretary in a huge constitutional storm. Would you recognise him?

Dewar was in smashing form; but then he always is. The subject was complex and delicate. Strewn across his Dispatch Box was a sheaf of closely packed, handwritten notes. Yet, barely consulting them, he strode through a

speech with authority, care and that pervading, wry pessimism for which he is prized. Lilley had conceded that the first Child Support Act had made a slow start. "A slow start?" said Dewar. "I should have called that description insanely bullish."

Tory backbenchers armed with quotes from Central Office briefs tried to trip him, but he knocked down every argument with ease, thinking fast on his feet. Seldom commented on is Dewar's vast intellectual assurance. He could be a giant of the next political era.

The man opposite him, Peter Lilley, has grown in stature over these last two years. He will never be a

Dispatch Box maestro, but he used to be weak on his feet and is now quite sure-footed. He learns, yet the longer you observe Lilley, the more impressed you become by the intelligence and consistency of his thought. Like the late Keith Joseph, he is unusually willing to listen to questions and engage thoughtfully — and without weaselly circumlocution — with critics. It demonstrates a philosophical self-confidence which his diffident manner belies.

A cold March afternoon, and nothing sensational to note: just two figures we hardly know, who may dominate Government and Opposition politics within three years.

Workshy foreigners can be expelled says judge

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Government won High Court backing yesterday for regulations stopping "workshy" jobless nationals from European Union states claiming income support in Britain. In a landmark judgment, Mr Justice Judge dismissed challenges by an Italian and a Portuguese to Home Office decisions that they were not "lawfully resident" in the country.

The two men had been asked to leave because they were failing to seek jobs. Lawyers for the men argued that the Home Office decisions were unlawful because as EU citizens they had a right to live in the United Kingdom, irrespective of whether they had jobs or were seeking work. Yesterday Mr Justice Judge ruled that the Maastricht treaty did not provide every citizen of the EU with such "an open-ended right".

Victorio Vitale, 26, from Naples, came to Britain in June 1993. Apart from three months as a chef, he had not worked and had received income support and housing benefit until they were stopped last November.

The previous February, the Home Office immigration and nationality department told him he was not "lawfully resident" in England and should leave as he was not employed or "seeking work with a genuine chance of obtaining work".

Ricardo Do Amaral from Portugal came to Britain in June 1993 with his daughter aged eight, a stepson aged four and cousin aged 17. He claimed income support on the basis that he was unable to support his family one month after his arrival.

In November 1993, the Home Office told him he was in the UK "in a non-economic capacity" and had become a burden on public funds. He was no longer lawfully resident under European law and should leave. Since then he had obtained regular work.

The judge said that the arguments put forward for the men highlighted the increasing contrast between the European Community as an economic entity and the political and constitutional developments represented by the European Union.

It was imperative that there should be "informed debate about these crucial issues and their likely long-term effect on national life before, and not after, they have been embodied in any European treaty".

Tories dismiss 25 staff to curb debt

Twenty-five jobs were abolished at Tory Central Office yesterday in an attempt to solve the party's debt crisis. Jeremy Hanley, party chairman, said the cuts were crucial to achieve savings of £1 million. Donations have slumped since the general election and senior Tories believe the shortfall could jeopardise the party's ability to match Labour's election campaign. In 1993 more than 60 staff were dismissed.

Hostages 'alive'
British hostages in Sierra Leone are alive and well as efforts to secure their release continue. Tony Baldry, a Foreign Office Minister, told the Commons yesterday. He confirmed that radio contact had been established with all six on Friday. It had been the first confirmation the men were alive.

Moscow visit
John Major is expected to visit Moscow for the VE-Day celebrations on May 9. He is likely to attend with other European leaders and President Clinton, who has decided against going to the celebrations in London on the previous day. The Prime Minister is also expected to visit Berlin and Paris briefly.

Lords defeat
The Government was defeated by 108 votes to 100 in the Lords last night as peers backed an amendment to the Environment Bill over pollution from abandoned mines. The Government wants to end the exemption whereby pit owners can claim they permitted rather than caused water pollution.

Crisp verdict
The Independent Television Commission has rejected complaints from 23 viewers about a TV commercial in which the former England football captain Gary Lineker takes a packet of Walkers crisps from a small boy. The ruling said it reinforced the message that children should be accompanied.

Gunman knifed
One of the men convicted for the shooting in 1980 of PC Philip Olds, a London officer who committed suicide after being left paralysed, has been stabbed to death during a brawl in the Tumbler public house in Hayes, west London. Leslie Cook, 35, had been jailed for 17 years for unlawful wounding.

Petrol stays
The Transport Department yesterday brushed aside urgent calls from the Commons Transport Select Committee for a ban by the end of next year on the sale of unleaded petrol on health grounds. The ministry insisted that emissions from the fuel posed an "exceedingly small risk to health".

Livestock hearing
A week of litigation, that could determine the fate of livestock exports, began in the High Court with Phoenix Aviation and a consortium of farmers and cattle dealers arguing that airports cannot ban flights on public security grounds. A similar challenge to Dover Harbour Board will be heard tomorrow.

Lottery hopefuls
Most heavy spenders on the National Lottery are aged between 25 and 34 and in lower income groups, research shows. In the AB socio-economic groups, 63 per cent have played. In the C2 and D groups, participation is 75 and 81 per cent respectively. Overall, 58 per cent of over-16s play.

Medical body let dentist with Aids stay on register

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

WEEKEND

A DENTIST suffering from Aids who continued to treat patients was allowed to remain on the dental register after the profession's regulators refused to investigate allegations about his illness.

Dr Vikram Advani treated patients at his private practice in Kensington, west London, for six months after beginning Aids treatment in February 1993. More than 1,300 former patients were contacted in 60 districts and were offered HIV tests after details of his condition became known.

The General Dental Council, which has the power to de-register dentists, was told about Dr Advani's condition in August 1993, three months before his death, but declined to act. His illness and the risk to which he had exposed patients became public only after he had died. It emerged that he had lied to the hospital consultants treating him, saying he had given up his practice.

Health officials have maintained that they did not know of his condition before his death. However, correspondence obtained by The Times shows that the General Dental Council knew he was being treated for Aids. Its informant was an art dealer, Steven Barnes, who had sold Dr Advani a painting on which he had defaced. Mr Barnes had investigated Dr Advani and discovered his condition.

The council told Mr Barnes



The case was highlighted in The Times in March by a journalist who was one of Dr Advani's patients

that it could not investigate his allegation unless he was prepared to swear an oath before a solicitor. Mr Barnes refused because he feared that he could be sued by Dr Advani if his information, which had come from a dentist who had taken over his practice, turned out to be false.

The requirement of an oath, also operated by the General Medical Council, which registers doctors, is intended to deter mischievous complaints. Mr Barnes said: "I would have been naive to make a sworn statement based on hearsay information, although it was from a reliable dental source. My complaint is that the council should have investigated it."

Despite the allegation, the council issued Dr Advani's annual renewal certificate, which would have allowed him to practise for a further year. By then he was too ill to work.

Mr Barnes took his complaint to the Health Department last January and was interviewed by an official. The following day G. J. F. Podger,

for the department, wrote: "We will take up the substantive issue you raise with the General Dental Council."

A spokesman for the department said that a reply was still awaited from the council. "We have to consider whether this was the correct way of going about things," he said.

It emerged after the case came to light that health authorities have no means of monitoring whether dentists are practising privately. The British Dental Association has called for compensation for HIV-infected health workers to encourage them to give up practising.

Norman Davies, registrar of the General Dental Council, said allegations about the physical or mental health of a dentist placed the council in a "very tricky" position. "We are looking at how we can address the matter. There is an issue about what information we acquire to approach the dentist and whether we would be given protection from libel. It is a very difficult situation. Often the person who is sick is the last to admit it."

Sara Askew, 29, recently



Julia Allison yesterday: "Never has the college been so close to industrial action"

'Demoralised' midwives to vote on industrial action

By JEREMY LAURANCE AND LUCY BERRINGTON

A MIDWIVES' vote to end their no-strike policy was caused by a demoralising lack of recognition for their "life or death" profession, they said yesterday.

Sally Herbert, 42, a midwife with five years' experience at Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool, said: "Midwives are doing 80 per cent of all births. We should be on a par with consultants: the ballot shows our demoralisation."

qualified in midwifery and working at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, said: "It's a life and death job but the pay does not signify the accountability and responsibility."

More than 16,000 members of the Royal College of Midwives — half the total — returned ballot papers, and 80 per cent voted to end the no-strike policy after 115 years. A second ballot will be held to determine what action to take in pursuit of their

pay claim of 3 per cent across the board, rather than the Government's offer of 1 per cent for all and up to 2 per cent to be negotiated locally.

Julia Allison, general secretary of the Royal College of Midwives, said: "Never in its history has the college been so close to industrial action."

Virginia Bottomley, the Health Secretary, said: "I hope midwives will think long and hard and get involved in local discussions."

Labour considers child benefit tax

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS to tax child benefit for high earners are now under serious consideration by the Labour leadership as part of a revision of the welfare state.

Senior shadow cabinet members are backing a scheme to tax the payment at 40 per cent where either parent is a top-rate taxpayer. They have rejected a proposal to tax child benefit for basic-rate taxpayers.

However, even restricting the tax to the higher-rate payers could prove electorally damaging. It would affect about a million parents earning more than £30,000.

A working party, set up by Tony Blair to examine proposals by the Social Justice Commission, an independent body set up by the late John Smith to review social policy, is now drawing up a draft paper focusing on child benefit, state pensions and student loans.

The aim is to have policy in each of these areas approved by the party conference in October in case of an early

general election. The group, which includes three shadow cabinet members and three members of the party's national executive committee, is split over taxing child benefit. But senior party figures expect it to back the scheme when it reports after Easter.

The Social Justice Commission claimed that £300 million could be raised. This could fund a 60p increase in the universal benefit, now £10.20 a week for the first child, and £8.25 for subsequent children.

Chaired by Donald Dewar, the Shadow Social Security Secretary, the working party is also expected to support the idea of a minimum pension with top-ups for poorer groups and a "learning bank" to pay for higher education financed by the government, the private sector and former students.

Members of the Communication Workers Union voted to keep their political fund, with 85.5 per cent in favour. The postal ballot cost £80,000 to organise, half of which will be paid by the Government.

Tebbit warns of 'German' Budget

By NICHOLAS WOOD

BANKERS in Germany would write Britain's Budget if the Government joined a single European currency, Lord Tebbit claimed last night.

He cited disputes over exports of animals, fishing, border controls and Gerry Adams's legal challenge to anti-terrorist laws as "hammer blows" where ministers had been exposed as powerless in the face of European institutions, or Parliament and the High Court were at the mercy of the "dictators" of the European Court of Justice.

A single currency would reduce the Commons and the Lords to the same level as the monarchy, "part of our traditional pagantry rather than our government". The Chancellor would still produce his red box on Budget Day; the contents would have been faxed from Frankfurt. Just as the Queen did not write her speech in the Lords, so the Chancellor would no longer be responsible for adjusting the nation's accounts.

The former Tory chairman's

dire warnings about the threat to national independence posed by the European Union were amplified by Bill Cash, a leading Tory Euro-sceptic, at a rally in Yeovil, Somerset.

Mr Cash, MP for Stafford, said it was time for Britain to stand up for its national interests and for self-government. If current trends continued, the country would have to pull back from the European Union, forming an arm's-length relationship with its partners. He told the meeting: "Let us say the unspoken word. We will not be subjected to a German Europe."

As Lord Tebbit renewed his prediction that people would stop obeying laws made abroad, Mr Cash gave a warning that Europe was on the brink of a new descent into fascism. "In Italy, Germany, Austria, even in Belgium, we are witnessing a resurgence of extremist parties. Take away people's democratic rights and their national parliaments... add centralisation and huge unemployment and you create



Tebbit: sovereignty at risk

the perfect conditions in which fascism will thrive and fester."

He called for a "new realistic relationship with Europe" — stronger than associate status of the EU but far less than political union. Britain should refresh its long-standing partnerships with America and the Commonwealth and promote "positive arches" between the continents.

Lord Tebbit attacked those who claimed that sovereignty was an outdated concept. "The falseness of such arguments is exposed once you substitute 'sovereignty'. You do not increase your power to make your own laws by sharing it with 11 or 14 other nations."

Clarke hits back

Continued from page 1
he was becoming a liability. "I always expect to be at the centre of the debate, but it does no good whatever for odd members of the party to keep calling for a fresh ideological debate on policies which are settled and committed," he said. "The markets keep looking at the political controversy in Britain. I don't think the few of my colleagues who keep trying to raise the temperature on our relations with Europe to great heights are doing a great deal of good to market confidence."

In spite of the attempts by ministers to counter a renewed outbreak of unrest, the Government faces further trouble today in a Commons vote on the common agricultural policy. With some of the whipless rebels expected to abstain, and the Ulster Unionists again threatening to vote against the Government, ministers are facing the prospect of their majority being cut to single figures for the second time in three weeks.

Business managers have been raising the stakes by making plain that the rebels will harm their chances of returning to the parliamentary party if they revolt tonight.

Government sources have pointed out that seven of the nine rebels voted with the Government on the same issue last year.

Mr Clarke, clearly angered by the attack on him, called on the Tories to "stick to a perfectly clear agreement" on the fundamentals of Europe. "We are a coherent and credible governing party because we have an understanding on every aspect of European policy, including the crucial position on the opt-out and economic and monetary union."

Lord Tebbit, the arch Euro-sceptic, returned to the fray with a warning that bankers in Germany would write the British Budget if there was a single currency. "If we enter a single currency, Parliament will — like the monarchy — be part of our traditional pagantry rather than our Government," he said in Yeovil.

Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, seized on Mr Clarke's remarks. He said: "This is the first time that the Chancellor has publicly confessed that splits in the Tory Party are damaging our national economy."

Peter Riddell, page 8

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Dead mourn have been o

By GILLIAN

THE mother of a young man killed in a motor accident broke down in tears when her daughter, who had been visiting him, learned of his death.

Dingwall Sheriff Court heard the case of a young man, 24, who died from injuries suffered in an accident while on a climbing course on a cliff near Dingwall.

The young man, who was a member of the Dingwall Climbing Club, was on the course when he fell from a rock face.

Dr Robin Dawson, 27, the club's secretary, said he was in the building when the accident occurred. He was not injured but his car was damaged.

Weston Ross in January, and his climbing companions were engulfed by a landslide.

Dr Dawson said he was in the building when the accident occurred. He was not injured but his car was damaged.

Skater's family in legal fight to stop 'hurtful' biography

By JOHN GOODBODY
SPORTS NEWS
CORRESPONDENT

THE family of John Curry threatened legal action yesterday over a biography of the ice-skating champion, who died last year of an AIDS-related illness after contracting HIV from a homosexual partner.

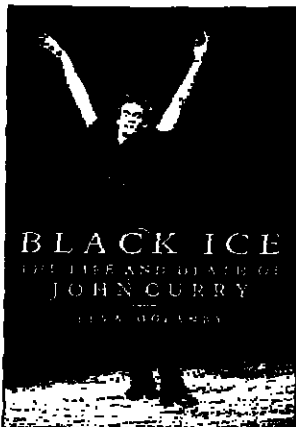
Curry's mother and eldest brother want to stop publication of the book, which claims that he was involved in drugs and mind-control therapy and suffered from the eating disorder bulimia nervosa. The family says there are inaccuracies about Curry's upbringing and that the book is not an authorised biography, as the publisher has claimed.

Victor Gollancz, the publisher, said that Elva Oglanby, the author, "has spoken to all of Curry's close family and friends". Michael Curry, the skater's eldest brother, said yesterday that the family had not co-operated with her.

"The book has caused great hurt to the family. It has claimed that my father, who is dead, was an alcoholic and he attacked my mother. This is simply not true," Mr Curry said.

His solicitors have written to Gollancz warning of legal action if *Black Ice: The life and death of John Curry* is published. The book, with a probable print-run of 6,000, is due out on March 30. It is estimated that it would cost the publisher £20,000 if it had to pulp the title.

Curry's mother, Rita, who nursed the former champion for more than two years before



Curry: the book

he died last April, has seen a pre-publication copy of the book.

She said: "It is quite beyond me. I am so angry. The description about his upbringing is totally false."

Mrs Curry said she knew about the impending publication only when she was telephoned by a friend, who was attending the world championships in Birmingham earlier this month. She was not interviewed by the author.

Early in the book, Ms Oglanby quotes Curry as saying: "I thought our family was close-knit, but looking back now I am shocked by the degree to which we were isolated from each other." Mrs Curry said yesterday: "This is not true. We were close as a family."

On the opening page of the book, the author quotes Curry describing his relationship with his brother Michael: "He would tease me unmercifully and devised all sorts of tor-

tures for me. His favourite thing was to dangle me by one arm from an upstairs window and threaten to drop me. The more I screamed, the more he liked it." Mr Curry said yesterday: "This is quite simply untrue."

The publisher claims that the book is the result of "hundreds of hours of intimate conversation" with Curry and that Ms Oglanby, a producer of skating shows, "has been involved with the careers of three of the top figure-skaters of all time": Curry, winner in the 1976 Olympics, Robin Cousins, 1980 Olympic champion, and Toller Cranston of Canada, who was third in the 1976 Games.

Speaking from Toronto, Mr Cranston said yesterday: "I do not regret failing to win the Olympic title, when John won in 1976. However, I do very much regret meeting Elva Oglanby."

Mr Cranston said that in 1977 he agreed an out-of-court contractual settlement in New York with Ms Oglanby, although he did subsequently work with her in the 1980s.

Liz Knights, publishing director of Victor Gollancz, confirmed that the company had received a letter from the family's solicitors and was taking legal advice.

She said: "In the early stages of the book we did use the fact that it was authorised and that the author had spoken to all of Curry's close family and friends. However, this was for members of the trade and had limited circulation. The book itself does not use that form of words."



Wendy Underwood, a former RAF officer, with her husband Rory, the England Rugby Union star, and their children

Rugby star's wife in MoD case

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE wife of the England rugby star Rory Underwood claimed yesterday that she was unfairly dismissed from the RAF after becoming pregnant.

Wendy Underwood, a former flight lieutenant, left the service in 1990. Her husband is an RAF pilot.

She said that the Ministry of Defence was guilty of sex discrimination. Mrs Underwood, 33, who became an RAF air traffic controller, said no one had advised her whether she was entitled to maternity allowance or whether she could re-enlist later. She told an industrial

tribunal in Nottingham: "Finally, I found out that pregnant women leaving the service were exempt from maternity pay. The RAF wanted to get rid of me as quickly and as cheaply as possible."

"I was told I could not go back in. I felt and still do feel that I had a lot to offer the air force."

Mrs Underwood had told Group Captain Ron Sheldon, commander of her base at RAF Cottesmore in Leicestershire that she would be coming back to rejoin the RAF after having her baby; he replied: "I wouldn't advise it. It's not a good idea."

She received a gratuity from the RAF of about £12,000 when she left. The MoD has faced thousands of claims from former servicewomen forced to leave after becoming pregnant. The MoD has admitted liability under European legislation.

Mrs Underwood enlisted for six years in July 1983. She later extended her service by two years. She said that had she not become pregnant she would have served in the RAF for 11 years and signed on for a permanent commission. She said: "I was never told I could go back to the RAF."

Richard Scabrook, for the MoD, said that had she stayed in the RAF she would have been unable to accompany her husband to international matches and dinners. The case continues.

Cot death mother accused of murder

By KATE ALDERSON

A MOTHER whose first child died from cot death syndrome murdered her two later babies by smothering them, a court was told yesterday.

Maxine Robinson, 26, walked calmly downstairs in June 1993 and told her husband that their children, Christine, 19 months, and Anthony, five months, were dead. Aidan Marron, QC, for the prosecution, said: "There was no sign of emotion."

Mrs Robinson, who denies murder, had acted "remarkably" after pretending to find their bodies, he said. She had not touched the children or asked for help before telling her husband: "I think the babies are dead."

While Peter Robinson tried frantically to revive the children, his wife sat quietly downstairs at their home in Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, Mr Marron said. "She had not moved. She had not raised a finger to help."

Victoria, the couple's first child, died from cot death syndrome in June 1989. As a result Mrs Robinson was trained by health workers to identify babies suffering from the syndrome or from any other kind of distress.

The jury was told that the night before the babies were smothered Christine had disturbed her mother's sleep. She was teething and had gone to her parents' room. She was still awake at 5am, bouncing on the bed. The trial continues.

Farmer is jailed for plot to kill ex-wife

A FARMER who tried to hire two hitmen to murder his former wife was jailed for seven years yesterday by Swansea Crown Court.

Geoffrey Morgan, 41, plotted to kill Claire Harcourt, 38, to avoid paying a £137,000 divorce settlement that might have forced him to sell his farm. He planned to pay £10,000 to contract killers to murder Miss Harcourt, a nurse, and plant drugs on her, but the men he contacted were detectives known as Ronnie and Joe Morgan, of Pengall Farm, near Llandysul, Dyfed, admitted planning to murder his former wife and charges of soliciting the officers to carry out the murder. Mr Justice Scott Baker said he was satisfied Morgan had been determined that the plan went ahead.

He said Morgan had been obsessed with preserving his farm and the lifestyle of his young daughter, who lived with him. "Regrettably there are those in circulation in modern society only too willing to kill for money. A deterrent sentence is necessary for this type of offence."

Lester Naylor, 52, a self-employed welder of Ashford, Surrey, was jailed for 2½ years after admitting joint conspiracy to murder. Naylor, a friend of Morgan, had earlier been approached to find contract killers and had accepted



Claire Harcourt: target

money, pretending he was in contact with a gang in Liverpool.

Tom Jones, for the prosecution, said Morgan and Miss Harcourt had married in 1975 and divorced in 1991. Although Pengall Farm and its livestock were worth about £1 million, Morgan had bank overdrafts of more than £200,000.

Mr Jones said Morgan believed Naylor might have access to underworld figures and paid him £4,300. Naylor said he could use a Liverpool gang but spent most of the money on himself. He later told Morgan the gang had been arrested for drug dealing and the money was spent.

Morgan unwittingly alerted police to his plans when he attempted to recruit hitmen.

Naylor, again acting as middleman, was arrested at the Severn Bridge service station when he handed over £1,000 as part payment to "Joe". "Joe" then phoned Morgan and gave him a chance to withdraw, but he refused. Half an hour later Morgan was arrested.

Vicar uses pulpit to deny tales of affair

By RICHARD DUCE

A VICAR has used his pulpit to warn gossips not to spread rumours of an alleged affair between him and a churchwarden.

The Rev Timothy Wilby, 36, six weeks into his post at St Leonard's parish in Preston, Lancashire, decided that he had had enough of stories linking him to Pamela Wrigley, a married woman. Mr Wilby and his wife Hilary have four children.

He said in Sunday's Lent sermon on sin: "If you don't stop talking about me and the churchwarden, I won't give you Communion. If I were a Muslim, I could wish that your fingernails fall out."

He said later: "I wanted to quash rumours about myself. I hoped some of the things I said would be taken in a light-hearted manner."

Some members of the 100-strong congregation were far from amused. One who would not be named said: "We are aware of rumours concerning him, but this type of threat is not on."

Mrs Wrigley said: "We are not having an affair. I have never been with him without his wife being there as well." A spokesman for the Bishop of Blackburn, the Right Rev Alan Chesters, said: "There is no truth in the rumour whatsoever."

Dead mountaineer should have been on easier course

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE mother of a young doctor killed in a mountaineering accident broke down yesterday when her daughter's shattered climbing helmet was produced in court.

Dingwall Sheriff Court, in Highland, was told that Margaret Herd's daughter Katharine, 28, who died from head injuries suffered in an avalanche while on a climbing course, had originally been signed up for an easier winter walking course on a different mountain but had switched at the last minute.

Dr Robin Dawson, 27, told the fatal accident inquiry that the exhilarating winter climb in the Torridon mountains in Wester Ross in January last year ended in tragedy as he and his climbing companions were engulfed by the avalanche.

Dr Dawson, 27, said he lay for five hours with a broken back before he was rescued.

The group of four, including 17-year-old Marcus Cross and Kevin O'Neill, 40, the instructor, were climbing the 3,458ft mountain Liathach when the accident happened.

He suddenly became aware of the snow moving beneath him. "The first I noticed it seemed to be spindrift but it seemed to get more and then it came to the stage it knocked me off my feet. I remember feeling smothered."

Dr Dawson lost consciousness and when he came to he was back at the bottom of the 1,000ft gully they were climbing and had severe pain in his back. He said he was aware of Mr Cross attending to Dr Herd and he could hear her groaning. Mr Cross also made Dr Dawson comfortable before setting off to raise the alarm.

Dr Dawson said that just before they started the climb, Mr O'Neill had carried out a

test to establish the avalanche danger. The instructor had told them he estimated the danger was low to medium and felt it was safe.

Mr Cross told the inquiry that after the fall he had seen Mr O'Neill high above them. He said: "I called out to Kevin. He was standing and kneeling down. Then he was just sitting there."

Mr Cross said when he got to Dr Herd, from Cruden Bay, Grampian, he saw a hole in her helmet and blood coming out. There was blood bubbling from her mouth. After clearing her airway he checked Dr Dawson before going for help.

At the start of his evidence Mr O'Neill, from Cumbria, said that unlike Alpine resorts, no legal qualifications were needed in Scotland for instructors and mountain guides, although he was a qualified mountain guide. The inquiry continues.

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Survivor of riverboat disaster recalls panic

By A Staff Reporter

A SURVIVOR of the Marchioness disaster yesterday spoke of the moment when he realised the boat was about to be hit by the dredger Bowbelle.

During a harrowing day of testimony at the second inquest into the tragedy that claimed 51 lives on the Thames in August 1989, Jonathan Phang said he had been alerted by Timothy Blake, who did not survive. "Tim grabbed my hand and said 'Get over to the side of the boat' and pointed out of the window," Mr Phang told the inquest. "We could see the Bowbelle coming towards us. As the Bowbelle was about to hit us, I saw two men running down to the bow. They weren't waving and I didn't see them shoot. They looked panicky."

Mr Phang and Mr Blake were at the bar on the top deck of the Marchioness while their friends were enjoying a disco below. Mr Phang, a models' agent, who had helped to organise the midnight party on the boat, was to be trapped under water as the Marchioness rolled over.

Mr Phang said: "The boat started to capsize. All the glass in the windows burst and water started flooding in. The next thing I knew, I was submerged and I fell out of the window—I don't really know how I got into the water. "I was trapped in the water. Something was on top of my chest. When that lifted off I turned round, and popped up. The currents were very strong. One moment people were all around me and then they were scattered."

A piece of driftwood came by. He and two others grabbed it, but it was not big enough to support all three. "Then a beer barrel floated by and I grabbed hold of it," Mr Phang said he drifted under two bridges in the currents and was getting extremely cold.

He even passed police boats racing to the scene of the collision. Eventually he realised he was passing close to a piece of equipment used to trap driftwood, with other survivors on it. He was able to grab it and was helped up.

Another pleasure boat, the Hurlingham, came alongside and he and fellow survivors were pulled through its windows. Questioned by the West London Coroner, Dr John Burton, he said no one had given them any safety instructions on what to do if the boat sank. No one pointed out any lifejackets or other equipment.

The man and woman who ran the bar of the Marchioness, and have since married, told how they were separated by hundreds of feet of swirling water. Pauline Walters said she was swept through Southwark Bridge, finding the tide too strong for her to grab anything, and then managed to clamber on to a wooden panel. A passenger boat, the Royal Princess, went past and someone threw life-rings, but they were swept away.

Adrian Walters said: "When I came up I couldn't see anybody, all I could see were balloons and debris. I was shouting Pauline's name. She answered, but was right on the other side of the river." He was swept into a rubbish barge, joining other survivors. The hearing continues.



Mr Phang, soon after the Marchioness sank



John Panvert at his restored oast house. The local council says that it must be returned to its ruined state, below, to protect the Green Belt

Oast restorer takes local dispute to Strasbourg

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

ONE man's seven-year campaign to prevent a restored oast house from being turned back into a ruin moves to the European Commission of Human Rights this week.

John Panvert, 48, a former jockey at the Queen Mother's stables, is contesting the orders of a local council. He bought the 200-year-old Kettleshill Oast House at Under River, Kent, in 1987 and renovated it for use as a stable.

A National Hunt permit trainer, he wants to keep four racehorses there, exercising them in the grounds of Knowle Park, a quarter of a mile away.

Sevenoaks District Council, although admitting the restored building is "very attractive", says that it must be demolished in the national interest. The council argues that allowing the conversion

to remain would set a dangerous planning precedent.

When Mr Panvert, an electrical engineer, bought the derelict twin-towered oast house and its adjoining barn for £12,000, it had long fallen into decay and was largely overgrown. The 1987 hurricane almost wrecked it and substantial work was needed to make it safe.

Mr Panvert said that he started rebuilding without realising that planning permission was needed to restore an existing building.

In 1989 he had just raised the roof timbers on to the towers and had restored the barn to roof level when Sevenoaks served an enforcement notice ordering him to pull down everything that he had done.

He appealed and won the right to leave the restored parts. Mr Panvert continued

to rebuild, finishing the roofs and topping the oasts with white wooden crows. In 1992 Sevenoaks ordered him to take off the roofs. Doing all the legal work himself, he appealed, lost a planning inquiry, went to the Court of Appeal and lost again.

At the end of last year he was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords. With the British legal procedures exhausted, Sevenoaks told him in January that he had to pull down the renovations. He applied for planning permission to use the building as stables but that too was rejected.

Last weekend he sent the entire file to Strasbourg. "This is a contravention of my human rights," he said. "I have done nothing wrong but I have been singled out. Sevenoaks are terrified that I am going to turn this into a



dwelling and they keep changing the rules. They moved the goalposts and now they've taken away the ball."

Jeff Gaynor, Sevenoaks planning director, agreed that the renovation was attractive and in perfect keeping with its surroundings. But he said that the council could not allow a ruin to be converted into a building with a use.

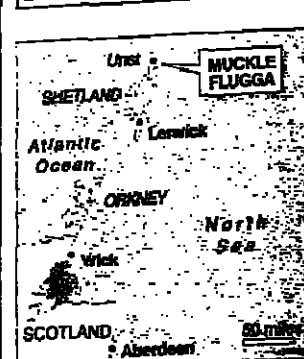
"We are facing a major problem here of creeping suburbanisation that is destroying the Green Belt, the

next best thing to a national park," Mr Gaynor said. "If people are allowed to resurrect dead buildings just to overcome planning restrictions, it could become a major issue."

"If we don't take action to stop this it would set a precedent that would put Green Belts everywhere in England under threat."

"We are dealing with a matter of major principle and nobody who loves the countryside would thank us if we let Mr Panvert get away with this."

NEWS IN BRIEF



Computers take over Shetland lighthouse

Britain's most northerly island lost its last inhabitants yesterday as the lighthouse on Muckle Flugga, Shetland, became fully automated. It had been continuously manned for 138 years.

The lighthouse's computers will be controlled from Edinburgh, via the RAF radar station at Saxa Vord, Shetland. There are 11 manned lighthouses left in Scotland and these will be fully automated by 1998.

Ronald Birnie, retiring principal lightkeeper at Muckle Flugga, said he would miss it: "It's not everywhere you can have seals, gannets and puffins for neighbours."

Thieves' haul

Lorry thefts cost hauliers more than £1.6 billion a year, the RAC says. Some 4,000 are stolen each year, either for their cargoes or for parts. Seven out of ten haulage firms said they had suffered theft or vandalism, yet small firms spend an average of only £1,000 a year on security.

Costly warning

A man who flashed his headlights to warn drivers of a speed-trap was fined £150 by Leicester magistrates. Leslie Conley, 48, a company director from Narborough, admitted obstructing the police. Afterwards he said: "They could better spend their time catching real criminals."

Ospreys invited

Five telegraph poles with platforms on top are being set up at Rutland Water in Leicestershire in the hope of persuading passing ospreys to nest. The osprey returned as a breeding species to Scotland in the 1950s but no breeding has been recorded in England this century.

Statue beheaded

Two figures seated on a bench in a bronze sculpture by Henry Moore have been beheaded. The sculpture, *King and Queen*, has overlooked the Glenkiln reservoir near Dumfries for more than 30 years. It is part of an open-air art gallery established by the landowner, Tony Keswick.

Blue Peter boost

Blue Peter is to increase its output from two to three episodes a week next month. It will be screened on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The children's programme, launched in 1958, is also to transmit weekly pages and games on the Internet, the worldwide computer network.

CORRECTIONS

□ Claire Taylor, convicted at the Central Criminal Court of an offence of child cruelty against her infant son (report, December 22) did not, in her evidence, blame David Larkin (convicted separately for cruelty to the same child) for the baby's death. Nor did he, in his evidence, blame her. □ The 1995 cost of the European Union's common fisheries policy (leading article, March 14) is £696.2 million.

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RSPCA 'spies' uncover quail fighting in Britain

By EDWARD GORMAN

IMMIGRANTS from Pakistan and northern India have imported quail fighting into Britain, according to the RSPCA, whose undercover inspectors have been investigating cock fighting.

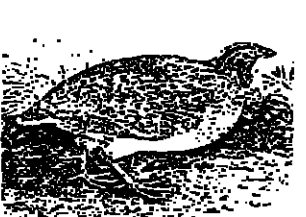
The society also said yesterday that a steady flow of instructional videos and equipment for cock fighting was being sent from abroad, suggesting that the illegal practice may be on the increase. A raid by police and inspectors on a cock fight in Co Durham on Sunday resulted in the arrests of six men.

Hamish Rogers, an officer in the society's special operations unit based at Horsham, West Sussex, said quail fighting had come to the unit's attention only in the past two years. Birmingham, where many Kashmiri immigrants live, was a known centre. In a recent case the society seized 68 quail and a large quantity of equipment for fighting. A Kashmiri man was arrested but was given police bail and fled to Pakistan before he could be taken to court.

Mr Rogers said quail, which

were much smaller than cockerels, could be very aggressive. Inspectors attempting to tackle the problem also faced a cultural barrier. "Quail fighting is a very common tradition in Kashmir," Mr Rogers said. "There is a cultural influence at work which makes things very difficult for us."

Sunday's raid on an allot-



The quail: aggressive

ment shed at Kelloe, the result of a tip-off, could lead to the first successful prosecutions for cock fighting for ten years. Police and the society rarely receive information in advance to enable them to intervene while a fight is in progress.

There is no doubt that fighting is taking place on a regular basis throughout the

country. The police, customs and the society regularly seize videos from America and Mexico showing either cock fights or instructional material on preparing birds for combat. Officers have also seized cock-fighting manuals and spurs. Under British law it is not an offence to possess spurs as long as they are not used in fighting.

Mr Rogers appealed to the public to help in bringing convictions. He said he and his colleagues were aware that providing high-quality information could be potentially dangerous for informants and that intimidation of people who might approach the authorities was a problem.

He said the society and the police treated tip-offs in the strictest confidence and considered very carefully the potential consequences to an informant before proceeding.

"What we would really like is any information that is going to enable us to catch people in the act," Mr Rogers said. "That would make the chances of a successful prosecution so much better."

Checkout produces weighty problem

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

WORKING on a supermarket checkout may damage your health, scientists at the Health and Safety Executive laboratory in Sheffield have found. They have been using high-tech equipment to measure the effect of sitting or standing at a checkout and shifting as much as eight tons of merchandise a day across the barcode readers.

"It's too soon to say that checkouts definitely are harmful," Mike Grey, of the executive, said yesterday at a Science Week launch in London. "We are comparing various ways the job can be done to see which causes the least stress and strain." In particular, the executive has studied

preferred by shops because they are less easily damaged, cause the operator more stress than horizontal ones.

There are 200,000 people working on checkouts, including many older people. "There's a lot of new technology in the industry," Mr Gray said. "People are likely to be suffering if we don't get the designs right."

Sensors attached to the skin show which muscles are working, how hard, and whether they are suffering from fatigue. One possible problem arises where workers both scan the products for price and pack them into bags for customers. Posture is also assessed, using videos

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Rock four billion years old indicates 80C temperature and water flowing on the surface

Martian meteorite shows glimmer of life on Red Planet

By Nick Nuttall, Technology Correspondent

A METEORITE from Mars has renewed speculation that life could have evolved on the Red Planet. Scientists have found that the rock, codenamed Allan Hills 84001 and believed to have come from Mars after the planet collided with an asteroid, contains complex organic molecules thought to be the precursors of basic life forms.

Mars today is a bitterly cold place apparently bereft of life, but the meteorite from the planet's crust, which was found in Antarctica, has been

dated as being 4.5 billion years old.

Dr Monica Grady of the Natural History Museum in London, who has been studying the rock, said yesterday: "There is strong evidence there was water on Mars, carbon dioxide and possibly nitrogen as ammonia. So you have got the basic building blocks. It is not surprising if organic molecules were produced."

The molecules, known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, have been detected by

scientists at the Johnson Space Centre and Stanford University in America using sophisticated laser techniques.

The discovery of the first complex organic molecules in Martian meteorites will increase interest in the Mars Pathfinder mission to send a spacecraft to the surface of the planet in 1997. The Viking lander of 1976 failed to find similar evidence because, researchers believe, conditions were not suitable for their formation. The new finding suggests that they are there or that they once existed and have since been destroyed.

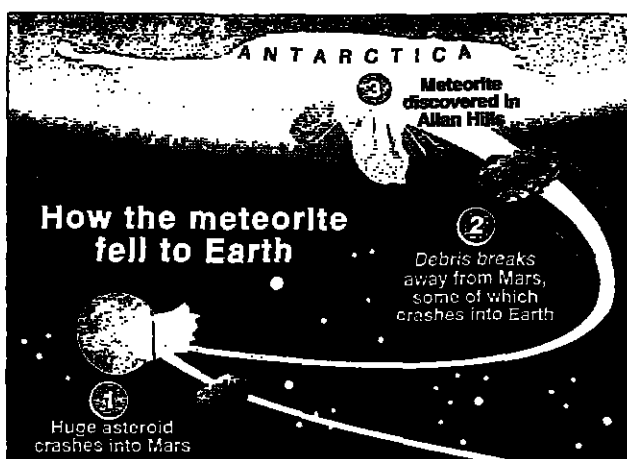
Whether the molecules went on to yield life forms remains speculation. Dr Grady said the levels of ultraviolet light hitting the planet were too high to sustain life as we know it. High ultraviolet light would have sterilised the surface.

"But then again it only sterilises the outer layer. So you never know what might be going on beneath the crust," she said.

Some researchers believe that if life evolved and survived on Mars it would not have been in the soil, baked and frozen into sterility, but in



Dr Grady with a piece of the meteorite that is thought to have crashed into Antarctica about 12,000 years ago



the rocks themselves where basic life forms had burrowed for safety. New missions to Mars may solve this riddle.

The discovery that Mars once had organic molecules is the result of elaborate detective work on the 1.9kg rock since it was identified as being from the planet in 1984. An analysis of carbonates in the meteorite, reported in *Nature* last December by Dr Grady and colleagues, indicates that

the Martian temperature was once between 0C and 80C with water flowing on the surface.

The meteorite was named after the site in Antarctica where it was found. It is believed to have fallen on the ice more than 12,000 years ago and was identified as a rarity only two years ago.

Dr Everett Gibson, a senior research scientist at Johnson, said yesterday that they had now used laser analysis to lift

off more complex chemicals. "For the first time we have found complex hydrocarbon species. But this does not mean they are related to life. It is too early and not all the pieces are in place yet."

About 11 meteorites believed to have come from Mars, the result of a collision with an asteroid or other large body, have been found. Scientists know they are from Mars because they contain pockets

of glass carrying the same gases that make up the Martian atmosphere. Whether meteorites from other planets are on Earth is unknown. Dr Grady believes it is possible that ones from Venus may be here but have been "mistaken for something else".

She said: "Jupiter and Saturn are made of gas and Neptune, Uranus and Pluto are mostly ice. So we have no real idea what to look for."

Racists attack choirboys

By Kate Alderson

CHOIRBOYS have been attacked by Asian youths in what their headmaster called a "scandalous racial attack". Ten teenage pupils from The Hulme Grammar School at Oldham, Greater Manchester, were attacked by the 12 teenagers as they broke from choir practice to go to a sweet shop on Sunday afternoon.

The gang's weapons included hammers and a sharp

instrument. Four of the boys were injured and two were taken to hospital.

Superintendent Arthur Critchley of Greater Manchester Police said: "We can confirm that the assault was racially motivated." Police said there had been other attacks by Asian gangs on white youths in recent months but none as severe.

Charles Sykes, 15, was recovering at home after being given stitches for three head

wounds and a knife wound to his thigh. Another 15-year-old was treated in hospital after being hit on the side of the head with a hammer.

Geoffrey Dunkin, head of the £3426-a-year independent school, said the hammer victim "could have been murdered. This was a scandalous, unprovoked attack which was obviously racially motivated. My pupils were attacked by Asians behaving like neo-Nazis and fascists."



Alexander: 42 stitches

Police dog savages boy

By Kate Alderson

A BOY aged 12 needed plastic surgery and 42 stitches to his head and after a police dog savaged him on his way to a football match.

Northumbria Police have begun an investigation into the attack, which happened after Alexander May stroked the eight-year-old German shepherd while his father stopped to talk to its handler, whom he knew, as they

walked to Newcastle United's ground on Sunday afternoon. The dog, which was on a lead, pinned the boy to the ground and bit his face several times before the handler pulled it away. The dog, named Rocky, was destroyed.

Alexander, from Whitley Bay, had extensive surgery for four deep wounds. His parents are to consider suing the police force.

Alexander said yesterday: "I patted and stroked the

dog's head for a few seconds but as I took my head away it jumped at me. I felt its jaws clamp around my face and then it shook me off my feet."

Peter May, 47, said that his son had been in a terrible state. "It is obvious there was something wrong with this dog for it to behave the way it did. It is far too dangerous to have these dogs mingling with members of the public. Imagine if Alexander had been a smaller child."

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Disruption undermines showpiece technology college

Six children suspended after revolt shuts school

By BEN PRESTON, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

SIX schoolchildren were suspended yesterday after a revolt over the threatened loss of a popular teacher.

Bob Pope, principal of Battersea Technology College, south London, took action in an attempt to restore discipline after protests by hundreds of pupils. Lessons were disrupted for four days last week and police were called after the first council-funded technology college descended into anarchy. Pupils, aged from 11 to 16 refused to attend lessons and marauded through the college after a demonstration.

The incident puts in jeopardy the future of the 500-pupil school. The college, which has received more than £2.2 million from Wandsworth council to specialise in technology, was judged to be failing last year by government inspectors. A team from the Office for Standards in Education is monitoring its progress before Gillian Shephard, the Educa-

tion Secretary, decides whether to send a "hit squad" to take over, order closure or allow it to stay open.

The disruption began last Monday when pupils heard that Jim Covington, the swimming instructor, risked losing his job as part of a restructuring plan. They presented a petition in his defence to Mr Pope, who closed the college for the day after pupils walked out of a meeting chanting slogans and spraying graffiti.

An attempt to reopen the school was abandoned on Tuesday after troublemakers repeatedly set off fire alarms. Only the oldest pupils were admitted on Wednesday before the college finally reopened to all children on Friday.

Mr Pope, who was appointed in January after being headhunted by the Conservative-controlled council, sent a letter to parents in which he blamed a handful of students for the decision to send home



Pope blamed revolt on handful of pupils

pupils for a second successive day. "I will not tolerate the sort of indiscipline experienced and I will take whatever steps are necessary in order that children may proceed uninterrupted with their education."

He said that Mr Covington had not been sacked but that his post was affected by a reorganisation of responsibilities in which teachers would have to reapply for their jobs. "No decisions have yet been taken on Mr Covington's future by the governors. When the time comes they will, I am sure, look very carefully at the views expressed by students."

The Office for Standards in Education said: "Our inspectors will want to see whether this was a one-off that can be avoided in future or an indication that the school is out of control."

Eamonn O'Kane, deputy general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said its members at the college were considering a ballot on strike action in protest at the reorganisation. Julia Allerman, secretary of the National Union of Teachers branch in Wandsworth, said that teachers had to reapply for their jobs two years ago in a previous reorganisation. "This is the last thing that Battersea Technology College needed. Staff morale is very low."



Campaigners say rules to ensure children wear seatbelts in minibuses are not enough

Minibus test urged for teachers

PARENTS of children killed in the M40 minibus crash helped to launch a campaign for compulsory training and licensing for teachers who drive school vehicles.

Last week the Government announced compulsory fitting of seatbelts in minibuses and coaches used by children. But parents and safety groups are concerned that

volunteer drivers are excluded from European licensing regulations due next year.

Under the proposals, only new drivers would have to take a further test for minibus driving. Existing drivers would be able to continue to drive minibuses with up to 16 seats without any checks.

Yesterday Tony Misiolick and Andrew Gunn, who each

lost a daughter in the M40 accident in 1993, which claimed 13 lives, joined the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers to launch the School Safe Campaign. "I am concerned about preventing accidents happening as well as protecting those involved in crashes," Mr Misiolick said.

Porter's role in surgery defended

By JEREMY LAURANCE

HEALTH officials yesterday defended the use of a hospital porter in a hip replacement operation. Dave Gooby, 35, was asked by a surgeon at Newham General Hospital, east London, to help to manipulate a patient's leg.

Mr Gooby, a theatre orderly, was required to scrub up and to wear a sterile surgical gown for his role in the operation after a junior doctor had been called to a case in the accident and emergency department.

The hospital began an inquiry after receiving a complaint about Mr Gooby's involvement. A spokesman for North Thames Regional Health Authority said that the inquiry had concluded that his involvement was "quite appropriate" and that he had been properly supervised.

Theatre orderlies "do this kind of thing when the surgical team need a pair of hands to pull or push the leg in one direction or another. There was nothing remarkable or untoward about it."

Fee proposal for access to public records dropped

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Lord Chancellor has withdrawn a controversial plan to charge for admission to the Public Record Office after a strong protest by Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls.

Sir Thomas, the country's most senior civil judge, told Lord Mackay of Clashfern that charging people to see a "great treasure house of national archives" would be a retrograde step. About 800-900 people a day visit the office on its two sites at Kew and Chancery Lane, London.

Charges would have been introduced on a scale, with reduced fees for students and senior citizens, and it is likely more than £500,000 a year could have been raised.

The two sites contain 93 miles of shelves holding documents on more than 900 years of history, starting with the Domesday Book. Sir Thomas lodged his objections as chairman of the Advisory Council on Public Records, which advises on what documents should be released under the

30-year rule. Sir Thomas said: "We did not oppose charges for car parking, use of the copying machine, things like that, but we did very strongly represent that to charge for coming to look at the great documents of our history and heritage would be a retrograde act."

To impose charges for those wanting to study public records would put a particular burden on young scholars, who were least able to pay.

There were also practical objections: the Public Record Office is in the process of moving its Chancery Lane records to Kew. It would therefore be a "particularly bad time to start any question of charging because there was bound to be some disruption".

A spokeswoman for the Public Record Office said the admission charges had been considered as a response to the Lord Chancellor's Department. She confirmed that a decision had been taken not to impose charges for at least the next two to three years.

Man denies murder in sex cinema blaze

A DEAF man thrown out of a pornographic cinema club in London after a row with the doorman took his revenge 30 minutes later by setting it alight with petrol and killing 11 men, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

David Laurwers, who had been drinking, allegedly set fire to the New City cinema in Smithfield after an argument over the entrance fee. People

in the audience leapt out of windows, climbed on to ledges and jumped on to a lorry parked outside.

Mr Laurwers, a pattern cutter in a clothing factory and of no fixed address, was accompanied by a sign-language interpreter in the dock. He has pleaded not guilty to three counts of murder on February 26 last year and two of arson. The case continues.

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THE WELSH ADVANTAGE.

MPs blame ministers for 'appalling story' of maladministration, anxiety and distress

Fathers wronged by CSA may get cash compensation

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

THE Child Support Agency is considering paying compensation to those caused anxiety or distress by its errors. The move follows a damning report by MPs that blamed government ministers for many of the agency's problems.

At present the CSA compensates only those caused financial loss by error or delay. But the cross-party report demands that compensation be paid automatically to wrongly identified fathers and that the CSA should make discretionary payments for "worry and distress" to others with genuine grievances. A CSA spokesman said yesterday that the agency was considering the recommendation and would respond within a few weeks.

A comprehensive compensation programme would cause even further shortfalls in the CSA's budget targets. In its first year the agency was expected to save the taxpayer £30 million but managed only £18 million.

In a catalogue of "incompetence" on the part of the agency, set up to track down absent fathers and make them pay maintenance, the Commons Select Committee on the Ombudsman accused it of wrongly identifying missing parents, poor procedures, failing to answer letters, giving bad or wrong advice and subjecting families to long and stressful delays.

The report said that the failures of the CSA were the direct responsibility of ministers who were too easily satisfied with assurances given by officials. They had failed to learn from the earlier disastrous introduction of the Disability Living Allowance

and had not reacted swiftly enough when it was obvious that they were going wrong.

The report said: "We are in no doubt that the maladministration of the CSA cannot be divorced from the responsibility of ministers for the framework within which it operated. Ministers should have reacted more quickly to the situation as the problems became apparent."

However, Alistair Burt, the junior Social Security Minister and the man in the firing line of the committee's criticisms, said: "Once you get into the live running of something as complex as this you

— out of 207,000 sent maintenance inquiry forms this year — had been wrongly accused of being absent fathers and must be compensated. "There can be no doubt that an error of identification must be greatly distressing given the sensitive nature of the CSA's work."

But the CSA also had a duty to act efficiently and capably and if its failures caused worry and distress to others the Department of Social Security should be "flexible and humane enough" to make discretionary payments. "The compensation payments made to November 1994 — £1.148 — are grossly inadequate when set against the scale of maladministration," the report said. Staff training was inadequate "and the CSA should have known that". Many of the 5,000 staff had received only six weeks' training in the CSA's "exceedingly complicated" procedures.

The report recognised that the CSA had succeeded in tracing 58,000 parents whose whereabouts were unknown and several hundred thousand who were not paying maintenance. But the complex formula used to work out payments led to "widespread mistakes" characterised by an emphasis on saving money rather than the quality of service. "Targets should place efficient service to the public before savings to the Treasury," the report said.

Mike Pimlott, of the Network Against the Child Support Act, said: "This is just the latest in a long line of official reports, all of them highly critical of the CSA. Its message is clear: the CSA must go."

This is just the latest of many critical reports. Its message is clear: the CSA must go

did find matters that went wrong that could not have been anticipated before," he said. "Of course, we are duty bound to learn lessons from that but a great deal of effort and forethought did go in."

The Tory MP James Pawsey, the committee's chairman, was scathing about the agency. On BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme he said: "Throughout the CSA's history there has been a very sad catalogue of maladministration. It is an appalling story, frankly. The running of the CSA leaves an enormous amount to be desired. There were grotesque failures in administration."

The committee said 70 men

Leading article, page 17



Donald Dewar, left, who told Peter Lilley that the Child Support Agency had been a "bruising experience"



Lilley defends 'improving' agency

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

PETER LILLEY admitted yesterday that there had been substantial administrative problems with the Child Support Agency but said that it was now back on track.

The Social Security Secretary refused to accept all the findings of the Commons Select Committee on the Ombudsman, which criticised the CSA and blamed ministers for a "catalogue of incompetence".

Mr Lilley said: "After a slow start the agency is now improving its performance month by month. Next year the agency expects to collect or arrange a total of £300 million of maintenance and the total savings are expected to amount to £540 million."

Speaking in the second reading debate on the CSA Bill, which aims to rectify

some of the main criticisms, Mr Lilley told MPs that neither side of the House or the press had foreseen the huge wave of criticism from absent parents.

The Bill provides for recognition of "clean-break" settlements and includes an appeal system to allow departures from the much-criticised rigid financial formula for setting maintenance payments.

Mr Lilley said no one should forget that two-parent families were having to pay £1,400 a year to support lone parents. "However good the system — and we are determined that ours should improve in every respect — a CSA is like a lightning conductor in a thunderstorm." He promised that the Bill would go a long way to rectifying

grievances while ensuring that children would receive more maintenance more regularly.

Donald Dewar, Shadow Social Security Secretary, acknowledged that limited progress had been made but said that most targets were still being missed. The CSA had been "a bruising and a bad experience and at times it has looked little short of being a disaster area".

Welcoming the ombudsman's report, he said: "It lays foundations for its accusations with a great deal of evidence of bad advice, maladministration and delay." He then called for proper compensation for those who had suffered unnecessarily. "It is quite remarkable that by the end of January 1995 financial redress had been

made in only 34 cases. That seems to me to be totally, totally unsatisfactory."

Liz Lynne, for the Liberal Democrats, condemned the Bill as only "tinkering at the edges" and said the CSA was beyond repair. "It doesn't go far enough. It doesn't have the support of absent parents or parents with care. It's about time you decided to repeal the Act and start from the beginning."

Mr Lilley retorted: "The Liberal Democrats suddenly want to go back to the days of inadequate maintenance arrangements, when even the cost of pet food was considered a higher priority in settlements than supporting one's own child."

Matthew Parris, page 2

Hanley produces sleaze dossier

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

JEREMY HANLEY renewed his attack on Labour councils yesterday with the publication of a dossier outlining allegations of corruption.

But the Tory party chairman ran into trouble again by criticising Labour councillors for giving jobs to relatives despite his admission that he had once employed members of his family at the Commons.

Listing several "allegations of corruption", the dossier said that councillors at Monklands council in Scotland had given jobs to at least 40 relatives. Mr Hanley said this was "totally different" from his wife and two sons being employed at Westminster. "The practice of MPs' families helping them in the House of Commons is long-established and indeed highly desirable," he told a press conference.

Mr Hanley has won little support for his faltering attack on Labour councils, a key part of the Tory local election campaign. But he said: "I am certain that not only the Prime Minister but also the Cabinet support me in this campaign."

The dossier, *Labour's Rotten Boroughs*, and comprised chiefly a list of newspaper reports of alleged corruption at Monklands, Corby, Tameside, Lambeth, Harrogate and South Tyneside.

Mr Hanley backed away from his much-criticised claim last week that all Labour councils tended to be corrupt. He said corruption meant a lot more than illegality and did not necessarily mean that all Labour councillors "had their hands in the till".

Frank Dobson, the Shadow Environment Secretary, said: "In a desperate attempt to head off the rising tide of criticism Jeremy Hanley has released a dossier of lies, distortions and irrelevances." The Tory party chairman needed some advice: "When in a hole, stop digging."

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Brown: "Minority at top are making millions"

Labour attacks 'unfair' tax regime

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TAX changes that come into effect next month will leave the typical family more than £1,000 a year worse off compared with last April, Gordon Brown said yesterday.

The shadow Chancellor said the cut from 25 per cent to 15 per cent in mortgage interest relief and a reduction to 15 per cent in the married couples' allowance would add about £210 a year in tax and mortgage payments. For a family on average earnings this would bring the total increase in taxes and mortgage payments since April to £1,064.

The income of the ten highest paid utility bosses had risen by £1,000 a week during the same period, Mr Brown said. "This is staggering evidence of the new divide in Britain between the tiny privileged minority at the top who are making millions under the Conservatives and the vast majority who are worse off."

Mr Brown added that homeowners also faced paying hundreds of pounds in private unemployment insurance as a result of proposals to cut mortgage help for the unemployed. Mortgage insurance would cost up to £280 per year for a typical homeowner. Labour is trying to secure Tory support to oppose the cut in mortgage help when it is debated in the Commons in May. Mr Brown said: "Falls in living standards show why there is no feel-good factor, but a feel-insecure and a feel-betrayed factor."

He said that the ten highest paid utility directors earned an average of £302,000 a year, or £5,808 a week, in the year to April 1993, and saw their basic salary rise to £356,000 a year, or £6,855 a week, in the year to April 1994.

Strong case for vetting of job-hunting ex-ministers

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Nothing says more about the current gloom among members of the Government than their fears about the Nolan inquiry. They are worried not about appointments to quangos or MPs' links with lobbyists. Rather, what is getting ministers agitated is whether the inquiry will suggest tight rules on what they can do when they leave office.

At a full day session today, the committee is hoping to reach at least preliminary conclusions on the main issues. There are mutterings that some ministers will resign if restrictions are imposed, a somewhat self-defeating response. Tom King, the only Tory MP on the committee, has been lobbied intensively by ministers. But their fears seem wholly out of proportion to what is likely to emerge.

These jitters are revealing. Many ministers believe they will be out of office in a couple of years and want to be able to earn some money while in opposition. They fear that a point of no return has passed and the odds are against them winning a fifth term.

There is also a real sense of personal grievance. Ministerial salaries have fallen sharply in real terms over the past 25 years, by at least a third and in many cases by over a half. Many promising ministers have to accept a substantial loss of salary when they accept office just at an age when they face the biggest costs of bringing up

families. They therefore resent the suggestion that they should be prevented from taking up jobs if they lose office, and possibly also their Commons seats.

But ministers are protesting too much. They are in a favourable position in relation to civil servants. Any private sector posts taken up by senior civil servants are subject to review by the business appointments committee and a waiting period of up to two years if the job is related to their previous responsibilities. Some permanent secretaries resent that these procedures do not apply to their political masters.

Ministers argue that their position is entirely different since their departure from office is seldom planned, and often involuntary and sudden. That is true and it would be wrong to erect further barriers which deter people of quality from becoming ministers, though that complaint only tends to be made when governments are unpopular. But the Government is on weak ground when it argues, as David Hunt did in his evidence to Nolan, that any restrictions could be interpreted as a restraint of trade and that the guidelines in *Questions of Procedure for Ministers* are sufficient in saying that former ministers should avoid

"any course which would reflect adversely on their or the Government's reputation for integrity". That will satisfy no one, least of all probably the Nolan inquiry whose chairman has recently stressed "the depth of public worries about standards of conduct in public life, coupled with a growing cynicism about the motives of those who go into it".

It is not good enough for Mr Hunt to argue that former ministers who return to business careers are comparable to those who become lawyers or journalists again. That is missing the point. The area of concern is not all ex-ministers who become directors, but those who join the boards of companies which they have been responsible for privatising. The number of dubious appointments is small — much smaller than popular allegations of sleaze.

But there is a need for reassurance, as a number of former ministers have argued. As was reported in *The Times* earlier this month, the committee is highly unlikely to recommend a formal waiting period. But there is a strong case for some form of guidance or vetting procedure similar to the business appointments committee for civil servants. If ministers are to avoid unacceptable restrictive rules, they need to demonstrate that standards are high.

PETER RIDDELL

MoD staff seek end to private job rules

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON

CIVIL servants in the Ministry of Defence are calling for an end to restrictions that prevent them moving straight into jobs in the private sector.

The demand will be debated at the annual conference of the First Division Association of civil servants (FDA) in May and comes as the Nolan committee considers whether tougher rules are needed to cover former ministers as well. At present senior civil servants have to seek permission before taking a private sector job within two years of leaving the service.

A motion from the FDA's Ministry of Defence branch

says that the restrictions are an unacceptable infringement of members' rights.

About 95 per cent of requests to join the private sector are granted immediately but concern has arisen with the disclosure that in the past two years 373 people have left the ministry or the armed forces to join companies in the defence field.

The FDA accepted that restrictions were needed where there was a conflict of interest but said they should also apply to ministers. MoD staff feared that concern about "sleaze" in Parliament could lead to the restrictions being replaced by a ban.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to social security ministers, the Attorney-General and Foreign Office ministers responsible for Overseas Development, Child Support Bill, second reading. In the Lords: Environment Bill, third reading.

TODAY in the Commons: questions to education ministers and the Prime Minister. In the Lords: European Union report on common agricultural policy proposals, In the Lords: Pensions Bill, third reading.

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Danger in Nato rush to expand, says Russia

A RUSH to expand Nato towards the eastwards will be a mistake, says Russia. The Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, said yesterday that the move to expand Nato to include Eastern Europe was a mistake. He said that the move would be a challenge to the security of the region and that Russia would not support it. He said that the move would be a challenge to the security of the region and that Russia would not support it.

Without naming any names, Kozyrev said that the move to expand Nato would be a challenge to the security of the region and that Russia would not support it. He said that the move would be a challenge to the security of the region and that Russia would not support it.

On the eve of the talks with the American President, the American Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, said that the move to expand Nato would be a challenge to the security of the region and that Russia would not support it.

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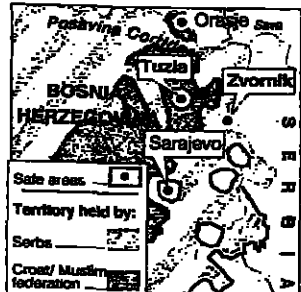
Muslim offensive stirs Bosnian fears of a bloody spring

By EVE-ANN PRENTICE
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

HEAVY fighting convulsed Bosnia yesterday as Muslim-led government troops launched a huge double assault that could mark the start of an expected spring offensive.

A four-month truce, which was supposed to last until May, was in tatters as battles raged around the towns of Tuzla and Travnik. Scores of Bosnian troops were reported to have been killed and hundreds wounded after Serb forces retaliated with ferocity. "This would appear to have all the hallmarks of a co-ordinated offensive action by the BiH [Bosnian army]," a United Nations source in Sarajevo said.

The battles began in the Majevica mountains east of the government-held city of Tuzla and around Vlasica mountain, a Serb-held peak overlooking the town of Travnik in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. The UN said it



monitored more than 2,000 government troops moving into the Tuzla area on Sunday. It has long been expected that the Posavina region north of Tuzla, where the Serb supply corridor is narrowest, would be the focus of new battles after the truce expired. If government and Croat troops cut the corridor, that would weaken Serbs in western Bosnia and neighbouring Serb-held parts of Croatia. The corridor is their only link with Serbia proper.

UN peacekeepers have been bracing for a spring offensive,

and debating whether to pull out of the Balkans if a diplomatic solution to the conflict is not found soon. A withdrawal would pose logistical problems, however, and concerted new fighting could trap UN troops and aid workers.

The perils facing the UN Protection Force were highlighted at the weekend when Croatian forces pinned down peacekeepers near the Serb-held Krajina region of Croatia for an hour with machinegun and rifle fire. Croatia has demanded a new UN mandate from June, to allow deployment of peacekeepers along the border of Serb-held Bosnia to block military supplies for the Krajina Serbs.

Yesterday's fighting in Bosnia followed a gradual increase in sniping and shelling in Sarajevo, the capital, which resulted in a clash on Sunday between the Serbs and peacekeepers after a mortar attack on a UN aircraft. The UN said it had cancelled all flights into Sarajevo yesterday.



Serb soldiers in Krajina train a 60mm mortar on an enemy position from their stronghold of Knin. At the weekend, UN peacekeepers were attacked by Croatian forces who want UN troops posted along the border of Serb-held Bosnia to block supplies destined for Krajina's Serbs.

Danger in Nato rush to expand, says Russia

FROM GEORGE BROCK
IN PARIS

A RUSH to expand Nato eastwards will be dangerous for Europe's safety, Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's Foreign Minister, said in Paris yesterday, brushing aside attempts by the European Union and Nato to reassure Moscow over an extension of the Atlantic alliance.

Speaking to the foreign ministers of 52 countries gathered to sign a French-inspired European "stability pact", Mr Kozyrev said that neither Western Europe nor America had risen to the challenges posed by a Continent no longer divided into Cold War blocs. "Outdated approaches and mechanisms" still prevail, the Foreign Minister added. "For instance, the rush to expand Nato."

Without naming America, which wants to see Nato take in new members over the next two years, Mr Kozyrev said that detailed discussion of candidates and terms for their admission to the alliance was recreating "the logic of confrontation".

On the eve of two days of talks with Warren Christopher, the American Secretary of State, Mr Kozyrev asked: "Why rush things when there is a risk of creating new lines of division?"

Speaking to the conference, Edouard Balladur, the French Prime Minister, also delivered a warning to the United States that changes in Nato should not be hurried. The alliance should be adapted only "carefully", he said, and should not restart "useless antagonisms".

Police in Germany fear open borders

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL'S top security aide shrugged off German police fears about Europe's open borders yesterday and said Germany would work towards making the Schengen agreement apply throughout Europe.

Bernd Schmidbauer was speaking six days before the Schengen accord comes into operation. The past days have seen frenzied rehearsals in key airports in the seven European states participating directly in the scheme: Germany, France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal. Britain has refused to participate.

Schengen opens internal borders within Europe and is supposed to be a first step towards honouring the European Union commitment to free movement. Its initial effect, however, will be tougher controls on external borders.

The German police are worried and irritated. Chief Superintendent Elke Bleibtreu, head of the German Criminal Investigators' Federation, said yesterday: "We still do not have the urgently needed measures to compensate for the loss of security that will ensue from Schengen. We need compatible technology so that we can keep in radio contact beyond our borders."

Herr Schmidbauer said there were safeguards to prevent criminals exploiting the open borders. The most important was the Strasbourg-based central computer that already stored two million pieces of information about wanted people, missing children and stolen cars.

Siberian oil spill threatens rivers

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIAN clean-up crews were struggling yesterday to contain a large oil spill in Siberia, which threatened to pollute an important river system and a huge reservoir.

About 3,500 tonnes of crude oil leaked from a damaged pipeline spreading over 24,000 square yards near the town of Tulum, about 230 miles northwest of the Siberian city of Irkutsk. Civil de-

oil before the spring, when the rivers thaw and the oil will be washed down river. Aleksandr Kamensky, who is in charge of the clean-up, said that the oil appeared to have leaked in three places, where steel plates had been welded onto the pipeline 20 years ago.

Ivan Blok, a Greenpeace expert on the environmental damage caused by Russia's oil industry, said the latest spill was a small fraction of the oil-related damage caused by ageing and leaking oil pipelines. "This spill is typical of hundreds of similar cases which take place every year in Russia," he said, commenting on the estimated three million tonnes of oil lost each year.

According to Greenpeace, the internationally accepted lifespan of a pipeline is ten years. In Russia, however, 15 per cent of the pipelines are more than a quarter of a century old and 75 per cent are more than a decade old. As a result, between 4 and 8 per cent of the oil is lost during processing and transportation.

"The only way to resolve the problem is to stop pumping and repair the pipelines," Mr Blok said. "Until the authorities realise that, we will continue to have these environmental disasters."



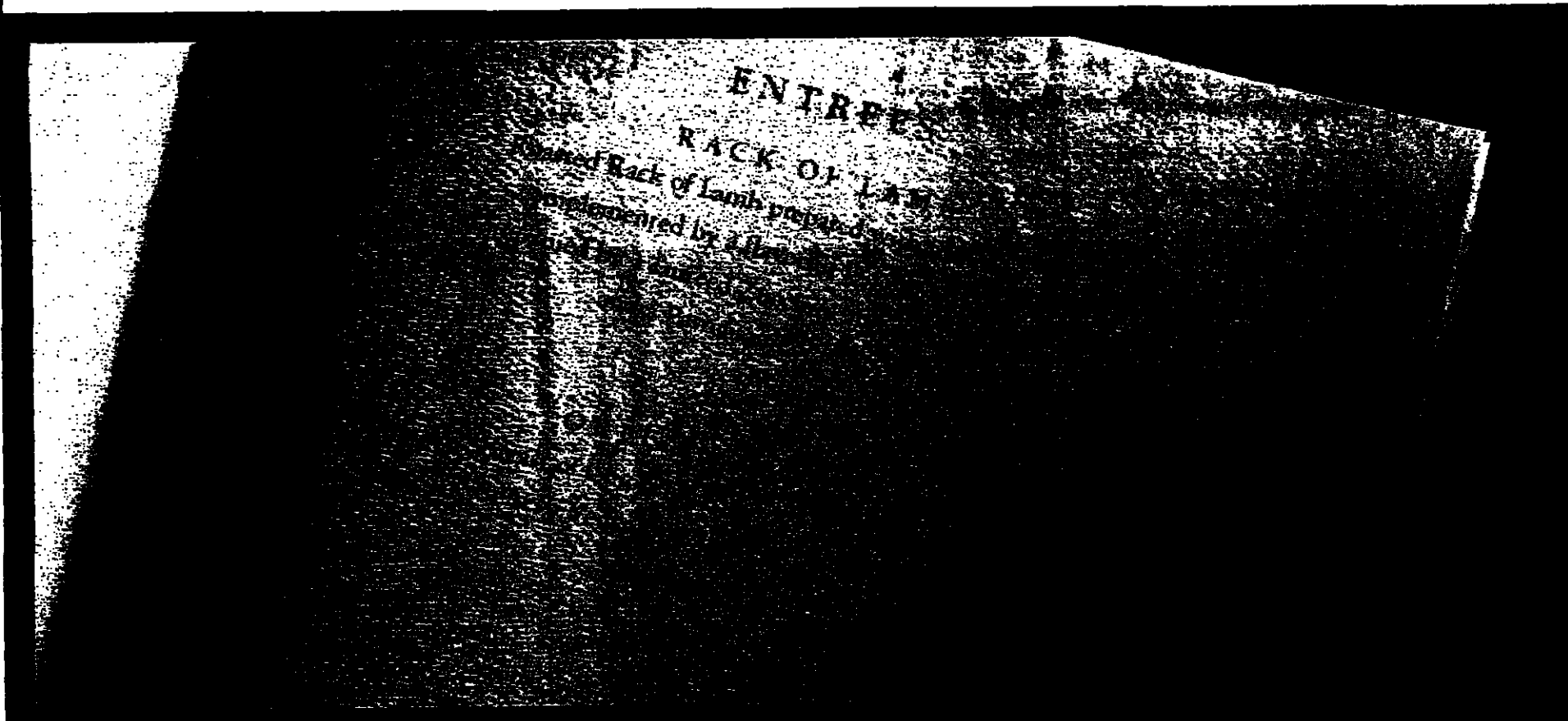
fence teams were working to clean up the spill, most of which spread over the frozen Kurzanka river, a tributary of the Iya river, which in turn feeds into the Bratsk reservoir. The reservoir is an important source of fresh water and hydroelectricity for the entire region.

The workers involved in the clean-up must collect all the

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Murder and mayhem on the subway after action against radical group in Osaka



Commuters collapse at a Tokyo subway station after toxic fumes poisoned thousands during the morning rush hour, prompting the mobilisation of anti-chemical warfare forces, right, to decontaminate the area



Police raid may have triggered nerve gas attack

By GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO AND
MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A RELIGIOUS cult was last night at the centre of suspicion after the gas attack on the Tokyo subway during yesterday's morning rush hour. The cult had a base in a village near Matsumoto, which was the site of a Sarin attack last June that killed seven people.

Police reported in January that traces of an organophosphorus compound linked to Sarin had leaked from the headquarters of the group, known as Aum Shinrikyo. The group subsequently claimed that the substance had been planted on its buildings by local businessmen opposed to them.

Police have since raided several branch offices of the group on suspicion that members were involved in kidnappings and intimidation

of former members. The most recent raid, on Sunday, was on the group's Osaka office to rescue a university student who police alleged had been abducted. Yesterday, the cult filed a 20 million yen (£143,000) suit against the police for unlawfully entering their centre and seizing documents.

The raid comes against a background of Japanese terrorist groups on the extreme Right and Left, which have become among the most violent in the world. In December police gave a warning that there might be a surge in attacks by right-wing extremists to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

There are an estimated 1,000 right-wing groups,

■ The attack on commuters comes as Japanese terrorist groups on the extreme Right and Left have gained a reputation for being among the most violent in the world

many well-organised and well-funded. Police said that radicals had been strengthening their alliances with large crime syndicates in an attempt to adopt more violent tactics.

By far the most threatening terrorist group has been the Red Army, a far Left group that grew out of the student radicalism of the 1960s and burst on the scene in the 1970s. This militant faction of the Students' Socialist League comprises the hard core of hijackers and terrorists.

They came to prominence with an attack on Tel Aviv airport in 1972 in which 27

people were killed and 76 injured. The Red Army then carried out a series of bombings in Tokyo, including one in the busy Ginza district, which killed eight people and injured 385. It was involved in bloody hijackings, culminating in the seizure of a Japan Air Lines aircraft in Kuala Lumpur.

After 1977, the group disappeared until 1986 when homemade rockets were fired at the state guest house during the summit of the Group of Seven in Tokyo. Nobody was hurt. The group was then implicated in a series of attacks in

Europe and the Middle East. In 1993, Red Army members were indicted for the 1988 bombing of an American United Services Organisation club in Naples, which killed five and injured 13. The Japanese Supreme Court last year upheld death sentences on two leaders for 15 murders.

About a hundred members are still thought to be in Japan, most others having been arrested or fled to North Korea or Lebanon, where about 20 leaders were believed recently to be with Palestinian guerrillas.

Left-wing terrorism reached a high point 20 years ago, when about 25 militant groups competed for support, including the Chukaku-ha with 6,500 supporters, the Kakumaru-ha (Revolutionary Marxists) with 4,500 members, and the Hanteigakuhyo (Anti-imperialist Student

Council) with a force of 2,000. In 1977, two extreme left-wing radicals hijacked a bus in Nagasaki, holding 16 people hostage.

Terrorist groups also exploited the long public demonstrations against the Narita airport, and in 1985 there were co-ordinated arson and sabotage attacks on the rail system in Tokyo and Osaka attributed to the Chukaku-ha group. Japanese left-wing terrorists have moved to exploit environmental fears, and police are worried that the shipment of reprocessed plutonium from Europe will present an irresistible target.

It is unclear who was responsible for the latest Sarin attacks, though police see an obvious link with the Matsumoto incident. Sarin is also thought to have been used in a gas attack that took place on March 5 on a commuter train

in Yokohama. More than 80 passengers travelling in one coach complained of nausea, sore throats and stinging eyes after inhaling strong-smelling fumes. Eleven of the passen-

gers were admitted to hospital after the incident, but there were no deaths.

Subway ride, page 14
The new terrorism, page 16



A bus hijacked by a left-wing group blazes as armed police lay siege to free hostages in Nagasaki in 1977

Students 'can easily concoct poisons'

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

MAKING Sarin nerve gas is not particularly difficult, but does require chemical expertise of roughly degree-level. Sarin is an organophosphorus compound whose synthesis has been described in patents and textbooks.

Much depends on whether it is possible to acquire intermediate products such as methyl phosphonyl dichloride, says Dr Julian Perry Robinson, an expert in the field, who works at the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University. "You would need more than an A level in chemistry, and some experience of phosphorus intermediates would be helpful," he said. "They can be tricky to deal with. But there have been people who have done it, and it would certainly be possible for a terrorist group to try."

The so-called G agents — Tabun, Sarin, and Soman — were originally discovered by German chemists working on organophosphorus insecticides in the 1930s. The chemicals are synthesised in a similar way, allowing Iraq to use plants designed for pesticide production to make nerve gases.

Dr Perry Robinson says he is amazed that terrorist groups have never before attempted to make the nerve agents. The methods of manufacture of the gases have been published in patents.

Perhaps the greatest inhibition to terrorist groups is the very high danger of an "own goal". "This is something for crazies," one expert at the German Federal Criminal Office (BKA), said. "Only terrorists with a kamikaze mentality would use it."

One curiosity with the Japanese incident is the apparently high ratio of injuries to deaths. Dr Perry Robinson said he would expect exposure to Sarin to have caused more deaths and fewer injuries. The symptoms that victims have described do not fit particularly well, he said.

Sarin: an old enemy that can kill in five minutes

By DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

MORE than 40 years ago, the Army decided that all regiments must have at least one officer qualified in what was then known as Atomic, Biological and Chemical warfare. As a potential medical student, I was appointed regimental ABC officer for the 10th Hussars.

In one of our first lectures, we were told of one nerve gas shell that had been retrieved and sent for examination in the laboratory. It had been opened with some care in an airtight container housing some rabbits. The scientist turned to pick up his notebook so that he could monitor the effect of the gas on the animals but, by the time he looked back, they were all dead.

Nerve gases are so toxic that the absorption of 1mg either through the skin or the lungs may be enough to kill. Sarin is one of the three nerve gases that has been available since the Second World War. Sarin, Tabun and Soman have now been supplemented by a fourth compound, the V agent.

Nerve gases are chemical compounds similar to many

used in insecticides; they belong to the organophosphorus anti-acetyl cholinesterase group of drugs, which was first described more than 150 years ago. Their great toxicity was recognised only in the early 1930s, in time for German scientists to exploit them as weapons of war after 1939. Sarin is poisonous either in liquid or gaseous form, and it will vaporise at normal temperatures.

Direct contact with Sarin in liquid form is particularly lethal, as was shown in Tokyo where the man who handled a canister was seen to die very quickly. The gas damages by inhibiting acetyl cholinesterases, which are chemicals in the body that are essential for the transmission of nerve impulses. Without them, the entire nervous system is put out of action.

In humans, death from exposure to a fatal dose of Sarin can take place in between five and 15 minutes. The victim may suffer headaches, dizziness, chest tightness, sweating, loss of vision, vomiting and convulsions followed

by death from respiratory failure.

There is little experience of nerve gas poisoning in humans but the belief, partly derived from the treatment of those who have been accidentally poisoned by similar industrial chemicals, is that the patients who survive will suffer long-term ill-effects only if the respiratory depression was so severe that it resulted in the brain being starved of oxygen. These patients may later have headaches, loss of memory, or more severe symptoms of long-term neurological damage, if the oxygen starvation was excessive.

Immediate post-operative treatment is with injections of atropine, which has to be given both intravenously and intra-muscularly as soon as possible. Acetyl cholinesterase reactivators can also be used and, rather surprisingly, intravenous Valium has been found to be helpful. Whatever the immediate treatment given, good general medical care with artificial respiration for the most badly affected, is essential.

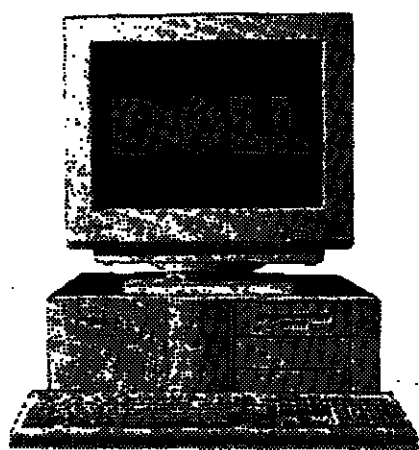
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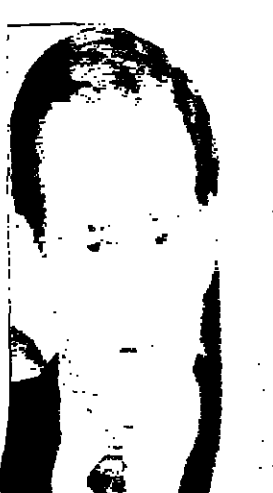
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Clinton trip to Moscow risks trouble at home

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT CLINTON will attend VE-Day celebrations at the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington on May 8 then fly to Moscow for a summit timed to coincide with Russia's May 9 celebrations, it was confirmed yesterday.

Mr Clinton's timetable will not allow him to participate in the British and French celebrations, but he will stop in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev on his way home from Moscow on May 10. To placate Britain, the White House formally announced that John Major would visit Mr Clinton on April 3 and 4, although that was widely known already. Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, said the President intended to slight to Britain and argue that it was logistically impossible for him to attend celebrations in London. Mr McCurry confirmed that Vice-President Gore would represent America at the British, French and German ceremonies.

The decision to visit Moscow was one of the riskiest the White House has had to make in the foreign policy field.

On the one hand, President Yeltsin's military forces are brutally suppressing the independence revolt in Chechnya and Mr Clinton does not want to be seen embracing a Russian leader who has grown strikingly authoritarian in recent months.

Robert Dole, the Senate



Yeltsin: end to months of semi-isolation

majority leader and Republican presidential candidate, is already making a big issue of Mr Clinton's support for Mr Yeltsin. Jesse Helms, the Senate foreign relations committee chairman, has threatened to denounce Mr Clinton on the Senate floor if he goes. Many Republican congressmen want to end American aid to Russia.

On the other hand, Russia was excluded from last year's D-Day commemorations in Europe and the Russian people would be deeply offended if Mr Clinton refused this invitation personally to honour their country's huge contribution to the allied victory in the Second World War.

A summit would also give Mr Clinton a platform for

pressing the Russians to agree to Nato's expansion, ratify the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and abandon plans to sell nuclear reactors to Iran.

To make Mr Clinton's decision a little easier, Mr Yeltsin offered last week to exclude any show of military force from Moscow's victory parade and limit participants to veteran soldiers. Russia is also allowing the first independent monitors into Chechnya and has begun softening its opposition to Nato's eastward expansion.

Mr Clinton is expected to pre-empt critics of his decision by using his visit to reach democratic opposition leaders, speak directly to the Russian people, and publicly demand a peaceful solution to the Chechnya conflict. His visit to Moscow will finally mark President Yeltsin's rehabilitation in the West after three months of semi-isolation for his bloody campaign in Chechnya.

The White House announcement, coming after the decision by the International Monetary Fund to recommend a £4 billion loan to Moscow this year, signals that Washington is prepared to back President Yeltsin, despite his increasingly shaky hold on power.

The anniversary of victory in Europe is a solemn occasion in Russia, where tens of mil-

lions of soldiers and civilians died in the war against Hitler. A refusal to attend the elaborate ceremonies, which have been tailored to suit President Clinton, would have been seen as an insult to the Russian people as well as to its leadership.

Nevertheless, the Clinton visit could be embarrassing for the American leader. America's support for the Kremlin will open the way for charges that the White House is appeasing President Yeltsin at a time when the European Union has adopted a much tougher stand, suspending a multimillion-pound trade deal until the fighting in Chechnya is halted.

Further, there is a strong likelihood that civilians will still be dying in the breakaway Russian republic while President Clinton is being entertained in Moscow. Russian attacks on Chechen separatist villages are continuing daily and thousands of civilians are threatened with deadly epidemics in the spring.

Russia's reformists, who are now at odds with President Yeltsin, will certainly regard the American President's visit as an endorsement of an ailing and increasingly withdrawn leader who has lost his democratic credentials and faces little chance of re-election next year.

Leading article, page 17



Hillary Clinton grimaces as she helps a technician to attach a microphone to her for the CNN interview, during which she presented a vastly different image from a year ago

First Lady changes image for return to public eye

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

DELIBERATELY measured and restrained, Hillary Rodham Clinton has returned to the fray: no longer as policy-maker, but as campaign wife and traditional First Lady.

In the first television interview she has given since widespread Democratic losses in November's elections cast her into the political desert, Mrs Clinton, dressed in conservative, Thatcherite blue, presented a picture vastly different from that of a year ago.

Then, she was the engine behind healthcare reform — one of the central pillars of President Clinton's White House. Today, as she prepares for a two-week trip to South Asia on Friday, she has become America's demure ambassador-at-large, who will try to gain Third World backing for her husband's efforts for a permanent extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Careful to give Mr Clinton credit at every turn, as she had done throughout his presidential campaign, she confidently predicted victory next year, saying: "People are going to vote for a peacemaker and a man of vision over politics as usual, and he will be re-elected."

The timing of her revival was studiously low-key. The rest of America was engrossed in the comeback of Michael Jordan, the star player for the Chicago Bulls. The President, she joked, was probably watching his own beloved basketball team, the Arkansas Razorbacks, rather than her interview with CNN. "I don't think there's any doubt," the First Lady said, "this is one of those terrible scheduling snafus."

Presidential aides say the new role as advocate of her husband's agenda rather than policy-maker comes as a result of a decision made personally by the Clintons. The White House has been more than a little surprised by a standing in the polls which has shown America rather dissatisfied with Mrs Clinton's unofficial title of co-president.

Buchanan promises to run a conservative White House

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON



Buchanan: will be 1996 election candidate

PAT BUCHANAN, the deeply conservative television commentator who savaged President Bush in the 1992 Republican primaries, announced yesterday that he would be a presidential candidate next year.

At a rally in New Hampshire disrupted briefly by protesters, Mr Buchanan said that his 1992 campaign launched the present conservative revolution and he pledged "to lead that revolution to triumph and into the White House". He then travelled on to Iowa, site of the nation's first caucus.

Mr Buchanan won a remarkable 37 per cent of the vote in the 1992 New Hampshire primary, having entered the race with a shoestring

budget and minimal organisation just ten weeks earlier. He used his wit to ridicule Mr Bush as directionless, unprincipled and out of touch, and it was a gravely wounded President who did battle later with Bill Clinton.

Mr Buchanan, a former speechwriter for President Nixon and communications director for President Reagan, will find conditions much tougher this time, although he still has a hard core of support in New Hampshire. He will be one of several conservatives seeking the Republican nomination — although he claims to be the purest — and he is no longer the obvious focus for protest votes. Indeed, the biggest effect of Mr Buchanan's candidature may be to expose the deep divisions within the Republican party. An

abrasive campaigner, Mr Buchanan sees himself as a "cultural warrior" who champions family and Judeo-Christian values and adamantly opposes abortion, gay rights, political correctness and special treatment for minorities. The intolerance of his speech to the 1992 Republican convention drove many moderates into the Democratic camp.

Mr Buchanan, who is 56 and has never held elected office, is also an "economic nationalist" and "main street populist" who rails against free trade agreements, the "bailouts" of Mexico and Russia, foreign lobbyists, foreign aid, illegal immigration and international organisations such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation, which he believes erode American sovereignty.

Mr Buchanan is the third Republican after Phil Gramm, the conservative Texas senator, and Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor, to declare his candidature for election as President. Arlen Specter, the Pennsylvania senator, is due to make his announcement next week. Robert Dole, the Senate majority leader on April 10 and Richard Lugar, the Indiana senator, on April 29.

San Francisco: Talk of a possible presidential bid by Pete Wilson, the Governor of California, is raising interest in American political circles, but many people in his home state disapprove.

Mr Dole is the clear front-runner in opinion polls covering the Republican candidates, but Mr Wilson is considered a threat because of his

position as governor of the most populous state. Mr Wilson, a former senator and Mayor of San Diego who is seen as a moderate because he favours abortion rights, has signed homosexual rights legislation and, in 1991, signed the biggest tax increase in California history.

He appears close to a decision to run, having confirmed recently that he has opened a bank account to collect money to "test the waters" for a possible White House campaign.

The possibility of a Wilson presidential bid has, however, received a distinctly chilly reception in California. Almost two-thirds of the state's voters surveyed by a Los Angeles Times poll this month, including 59 per cent of Republicans, said Mr Wilson should not seek the nomination. (Reuters)



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Thousands cheer as the President welcomes Queen

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN CAPE TOWN

IN A rare display of post-imperial splendour, the Royal Yacht Britannia nosed into Cape Town harbour yesterday as the Queen began her state visit to South Africa.

On a brilliant morning under Table Mountain, capped with its tablecloth of cloud, and accompanied by a flotilla of small craft laden to the gunwales with sightseers, the yacht sailed close to the notorious Robben Island, the prison that was home to President Mandela for many years.

A predominantly white crowd of thousands packed every ledge of the quayside, with only a sprinkling of black faces, apart from a few well-drilled platoons of schoolchildren. Even in the new South Africa, the five rands (£1) bus fare from the black townships is money that can be better spent.

As the Queen descended the gangway, the warm south-easterly breeze that freshened the air, and is therefore known locally as the Cape Doctor, snatched at the Queen's blue straw hat. She had to keep one cautious hand fixed to her head as Mr Mandela stepped forward to greet her with a hearty: "Your Majesty, welcome to South Africa." With equal joviality he greeted the Duke of Edinburgh with: "Your Royal Highness, how are you?"

As a South African navy band played one British and two South African national anthems — the new one and the old Afrikaner one — competing royalty displayed a clash of colour on the jetty. The Queen wore a sky blue linen coat; Rochelle Mitrara, a niece of Mr Mandela who now acts as his presidential lady, wore the brilliant orange dress

and headgear of a member of the royal house of the Thembu tribe, of which Mr Mandela is a member.

Ships' hooters blared, the crowd applauded and cheered, and six jet fighters roared overhead in formation trailing red, white and blue smoke as the Queen met a line-up of leading public figures including Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

At the presidential residence in Cape Town, the Queen presented Mr Mandela with the insignia of the Order of Merit, of which the only other living foreign recipient is Mother Teresa. Mr Mandela invested her with South Africa's Order of Good Hope.

The Queen presented an annual scholarship for a South African graduate to study at the London School of Economics, and a blue leather desk set. She received a brooch of precious stones set in the design and colour of the new South African flag. It contained everything but diamonds, one of the country's leading exports. But the Queen already owns the biggest one ever mined in South Africa: the Cullinan.

At a state banquet last night, the Queen came as close as she is likely to during her tour to satisfying Afrikaner demands for an apology for their treatment at British hands during the Boer War. "Only eight years after our two countries had been at war, with all the pain and suffering which that entailed, especially for the Afrikaner people, Queen Victoria's son, the Duke of Connaught, laid the foundation stone of the Union Building in Pretoria," she said. Mr Mandela accepted an invitation to make a return state visit to Britain next year.

Leading article, page 17



Children wave the South African and British flags at the start of the royal tour as the Queen and President Mandela walk on parliament

'I have come to see what is little short of a miracle'

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUEEN'S SPEECH

FORTY-EIGHT years ago I watched my father opening parliament here — the first he opened in any of his dominions. I come here in very different circumstances, but ever since that visit I have felt that my memories of South Africa are part of me, and I have wanted to return to this magnificent country.

That wish has never deserted me through a half century during which you have seen turmoil and tragedy. Now, though, you have become one nation, whose spirit of reconciliation is a shining example to the world, and I have come back to see for myself what is little short of a miracle. This year, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of

the war, we shall have many reminders that South Africa's contribution to victory for the Allies was, as in the First World War, immense. Three hundred and fifty thousand South Africans volunteered, and 12,000, of all races, lost their lives. In his speech to parliament all those years ago, my father paid tribute to that great sacrifice. He continued: "You are now dealing with the problems of peace — a peace which must be based on the principles of freedom and justice if it is to endure." Your struggle has shown that the only way to true peace is

through those principles, of which so many throughout this country have been worthy champions. Democratic values bring benefits and opportunities with them, and these are now becoming clear here, where your people can advance themselves irrespective of wealth and background.

Throughout the years apart from South Africa, the Commonwealth worked to bring about the transition which led to your rejoining last June, after 32 years of separation. It gave me so much pleasure to see you regain your rightful place.

[The year] 1995 marks the bicentenary of the first links between our two countries. Our relationship, like that between many old friends, has been, at times, a tempestuous one. Our peoples have fought against each other, as they have together against a common enemy. But we can, together, feel unreserved pride in the role which so many Britons and South Africans have played in our respective countries.

Next year, I look forward to welcoming you, Mr President, on the first ever state visit to Britain by a South African Head of State. It will happen as we approach the end of the 20th century and peer into the next. The view may sometimes be a little obscure, but the events in South Africa of the last few years have helped to bring rays of sunshine to pierce the mist. May the sun shine ever brighter.

Angry teacher says shantytown school not fit for royalty

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN CAPE TOWN

FOR Nozukile Tom, the principal of a school for the disabled in Khayelitsha near Cape Town, the visit by the Queen to her township today will be an unhappy occasion. "Our school is not fit for a Queen," she said with sarcasm. "That is why we have not been invited to take part."

Mrs Tom, a plump, sad-eyed mother of six, runs a voluntary feeding and education scheme for disabled township children aged between a year and 15. The school, a cluster of steel shipping crates boxed together on a strip of sandy scrubland, has no books, stationery or lavatories. With only one wheelchair between them, the 30 or so children, whose disabilities range from Down's Syndrome to epilepsy, are transported to and from their homes in supermarket trolleys. "It is wrong that disabled children should be treated like this," she said angrily, "but there is no money."

Local residents suggest that the Philani nutrition centre, barely 100 yards away, has been chosen to receive the Queen because it will create the right impression. The well-equipped project, assisted by British funds, aims to rehabilitate malnourished children and provides mothers training in weaving. With its brightly painted brick buildings, neat lawn and com-

pany cars, is a happy island in a sea of squalor.

Khayelitsha is an eyesore. Drive along the motorway from Cape Town's elegant city centre past the white suburbs with their sparkling blue swimmingpools and the appalling squatter camps of the windswept Cape Flats suddenly loom on all sides. It was here during the 1980s that residents of the sprawling squatter community of Crossroads were forcibly removed to nearby Khayelitsha (New Town).

Today the filthy township is home to about a million blacks who live cheek-by-jowl in endless rows of tiny makeshift shacks. The vast majority of homes have no running water or electricity.

Kalli Bole, 26, a part-time cleaner, is typical. His unit, one-room shack, no more than 20ft long, which he shares with his wife and two children, is built of wood and rusty corrugated iron which leaks when it rains.

He said "Nothing has changed around here since Mandela came to power, but I expected things might have improved a least a little by now." Despite his disappointment, he supports the African National Congress unconditionally. "I will probably vote for him [Mandela] again because there is nobody else to vote for. I would never vote for the National Party."



The Queen presents President Mandela with the insignia of the Order of Merit in Cape Town

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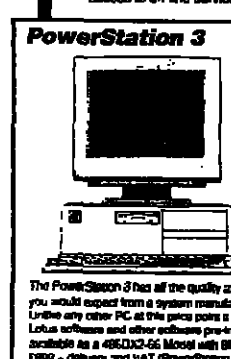
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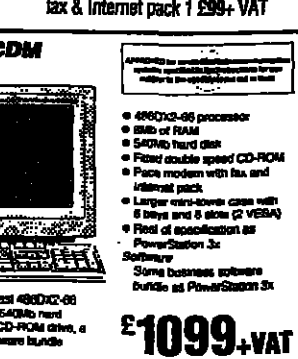
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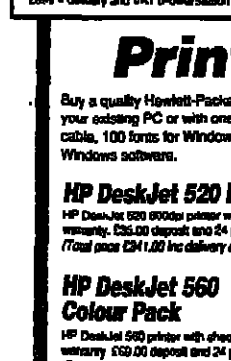
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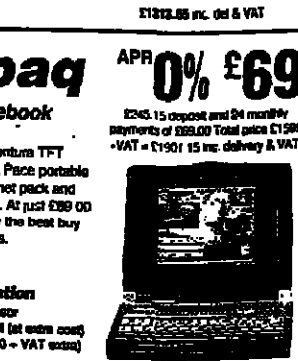
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The vital steroid inhaler has been redesigned to make it environment-friendly, Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports

Help for asthma victims and the ozone layer, too

THE LIFESTYLE of asthmatic patients has been revolutionised by the introduction of metered-dose inhalers. The standard advice now given is that, in most cases, the basis of long-term treatment for asthma should be with inhaled steroids.

The dose can be varied according to the degree of breathlessness; if this is insufficient, steroids, either by mouth or injection, can be used in addition.

Ventolin or similar salbutamol inhalers are also essential, but as a first-aid measure to control a sudden attack, or even a worsening of an existing wheeze. If patients find that they are having to use their Ventolin regularly they should assume that their regime needs review.

Doctors and patients have been reassured that the most tiresome side-effect of inhaled steroids seems to be that they allow through to develop in the mouth and around the vocal cords, as well as causing pain and discomfort from sores around the corners of the lips, on the tongue and in the palate.

They also reduce the patient's ability to sing in tune. Many asthmatics, once the star of the choir, have had to

resign their treasured place in it after inhaled steroids have blunted their voice, so that it would no longer satisfy the choirmaster. Doctors' confidence in inhaled steroids has been scratched, although not really denied, by a recent report from research workers at the Harmer Smith Hospital, the Royal Brompton Hospital and

the National Heart Hospital in London, which suggests that normal therapeutic doses of inhaled steroids may reduce osteocalcin levels and thereby increase the likelihood of asthmatic patients going on to develop osteoporosis. Whenever drugs are prescribed there has to be a risk-benefit analysis; in this case, given the present evidence, the

benefit patients obtain from inhalers, which can be lifesaving, far outweighs the disadvantages as they are known today.

METERED-DOSE inhalers not only send a puff of steroid into the mouth and lungs of the patient, but also send CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), the propellants, into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to the destruction of the ozone layer. Under the terms of the

Montreal Protocol the manufacture of sprays dependent on CFCs was banned for this reason, but an exception was made for the metered-dose inhalers used in asthma therapy.

One company, 3M Health Care, has now produced a CFC-free metered-dose inhaler, the Airomir, to deliver salbutamol. The standard inhaler had to be entirely redesigned, but after extensive modification it delivers salbutamol without any risk of CFCs reaching the ozone layer.

Research has shown that the CFC-free metered-dose inhaler delivers salbutamol which is every bit as safe and efficient as that delivered by an inhaler using a chlorofluorocarbon propellant.

Are we really getting more miserable?

Our nostalgia for a lost age when people were happier seems to be justified, says Dr Simon Wessely

Virtually everyone over the age of 30 shares the view that things used to be better. It is easy to reminisce about some golden age when the streets were safe, the schools were good, doctors had time for you and people were happier. The usual response to such moans is to quote similar observations through the ages, and to conclude that the view that the world of the past was a better place is a trick of memory.

But many psychiatrists are now claiming that we really were happier in the past; or, to put it another way, that the rates of depression are higher now than at any other time. This observation is based not on nostalgia but on studies across the world, which are reviewed in a new book, *Psychosocial Disorders Among Young People*, edited by Michael Rutter and D. Smith, to be published next month by John Wiley.

What is the evidence? A series of large studies on depression by the National Institute of Mental Health in America found that those born after the last war were twice as likely to develop depression as those born before. Another study suggested the differences might be as much as threefold. The age at which people first become depressed also seems to be falling.

Similar findings have been reported from Germany, Sweden, Canada and New Zealand. Nearly all of them also showed that the biggest rise in depression was among men.

Genetic factors are important in depression but these cannot explain such a rapid change. One possible clue to its causes lies in the timing of depression in children before the onset of puberty are low, and suicide is extremely unusual. Depressive feelings seem to develop between the ages of 10 and 14.

From the middle of the last century the age of puberty has been falling steadily, although it has now reached a plateau.

Most researchers rule out a direct hormonal effect on the risk of childhood depression; rather, the influence of puberty seems to be on the development of feelings and emotions. Girls are less likely than boys to welcome the changes in their body brought on by puberty, and those who mature early have more depression and lower self-esteem.

Puberty also leads to an interest in slightly older age groups. The earlier this happens, the greater the chance of exposure to drugs and alcohol. This is particularly important because boys or girls who go through puberty earlier than others do not show a similar increase in their intellectual

maturity, and thus may be more vulnerable.

Few will be surprised to learn that there is a link between parental divorce and depression in adolescents. This is a response not only to the separation of parents, but also to the marital discord that inevitably precedes it.

Finally, research has convincingly implicated the rise of unemployment over the last generation. Mass unemployment in the 1930s affected whole communities, which may have lessened its psychological (as opposed to financial) impact on the individual. Now financial issues are less important, but the blow to educational and work aspirations is greater.

These findings are not just of academic interest. Along with the rise in depression, suicide rates in young people are increasing in every European country, with the sole, and inexplicable, exception of Germany. The Department of Health has not been slow to respond to these findings, and reducing the suicide rate is a key target of the *Health of the Nation* report. How that should be achieved is less clear, and may depend upon changes in the way we live that are beyond the influence even of Virginia Bottomley.

Stopping cancer in its tracks

Drug companies are racing to develop a new cancer therapy. Nigel Hawkes reports

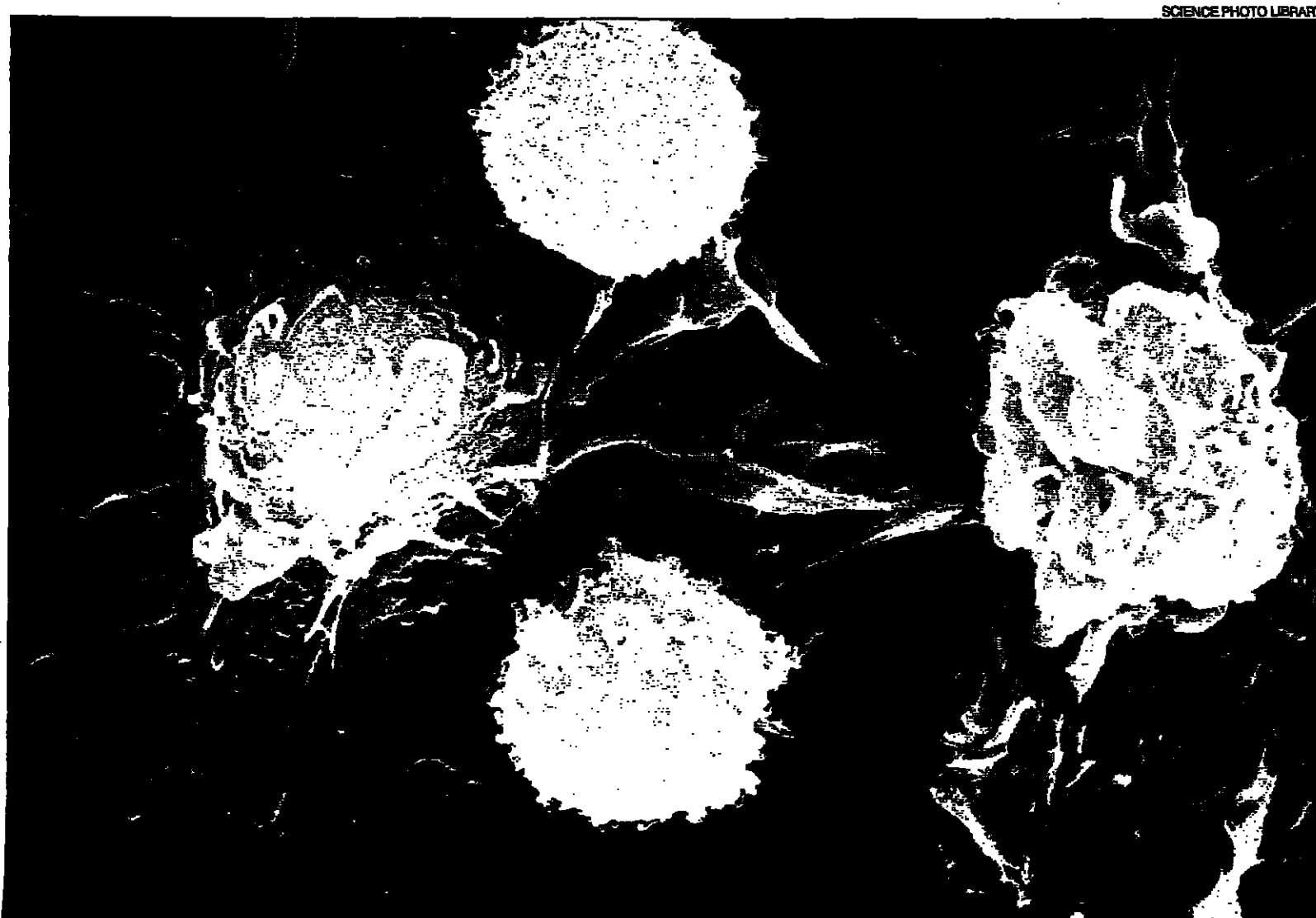
A new class of cancer drugs, the first to use subtle rather than brute force, are close to clinical trials. Today, at the Toronto meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, scientists will report that they are almost ready for human trials of agents designed to disable a gene believed to be responsible for 20 to 30 per cent of all cancers.

The gene is called *ras*, and was first discovered in 1978 through its abilities to cause rat sarcomas — hence its name. The proteins produced at the direction of these genes are regulators of cell growth, and mutations in the genes produce a defective protein that ignores signals to stop cell growth. The result is cancer.

Mutant *ras* genes are present in 90 per cent of pancreatic cancers, half of colon cancers and a quarter of lung cancers. The role of the new drugs is to block the action of the gene, the first time this has been tried as a way of treating cancer. Drug companies are racing to bring the first of these *ras*-inhibitors to market.

Among the leaders is Merck & Co. of West Point, Pennsylvania, which expects to begin a clinical trial within a year to 18 months. "These really are the first drugs designed to block the action of a single specific cancer gene," says Dr Allen Oliff, executive director of cancer research for Merck. "We believe this specificity will mean safer and more effective patient therapies."

But Merck is not alone.



Two cancer cells, right and left, in the final stage of division: tomorrow's drugs aim to prevent the uncontrolled cell growth that causes tumours

"Right now *ras* is one of the hottest targets for cancer therapy," says Dr Said Sebti of the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, one of those presenting new evidence today. "Just about every pharmaceutical company has its own *ras*-inhibitor research programme, or is thinking of starting one."

Until now almost all cancer therapies have worked by

either by the use of toxic drugs. Accurately targeted, the therapies are supposed to destroy the tumours without doing too much collateral damage to healthy cells, but the side-effects of most cancer treatments show that this is more hope than reality. The new drugs are designed to trip up the runaway cells rather than simply blasting them apart. In the cell, the *ras* protein is one of a chain that leads from the surface to the

interior. When the surface end of the chain is activated by hormones or enzymes, a signal travels down the chain until it reaches the cell nucleus, triggering cell division.

In 1990, Drs Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein, of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre in Dallas, discovered that an enzyme was needed for the *ras* protein to send its message. The enzyme, called farnesyltransferase, has the job of attaching a chemical code to the protein, rather like a post code, to tell it where to go. If this enzyme can be blocked, the defective *ras* protein never gets through, and the cancer does not get started.

The researchers found that the inhibitors were far more effective against tumour cells than they really expected. Dr Sebti says: "No one actually thought *ras*-inhibitors were ever going to be as specific to tumour cells as they have turned out to be. But in animal studies we and other groups have selectively suppressed tumour growth without harmful effects."

Dr Sebti and colleague Dr Andrew Hamilton will report today on a range of *ras*-inhibitors they have developed which they believe to be considerably more effective than those developed earlier.

The Pittsburgh compounds do not contain peptides, which means they are less susceptible to being broken down by enzymes in the body. Once inside cells, says Dr Hamilton, these *ras*-inhibitors are a hundred times more potent than earlier compounds. The team is now in discussion with several drug companies. Potency could be the critical

factor. "If too much of a drug is needed," Dr Sebti says, "no matter how selective it is, some of the drug may accidentally hit bystander molecules and have a toxic effect." The latest contender from Merck is being kept under wraps, but Dr Oliff says that it, too, has a similar high potency.

Other companies have latched on to different points in the *ras* pathway, which may offer equal or greater promise. Researchers are now fine-tuning the molecules so that they will safely circulate in patients' blood, find their way to the tumour, stay there long enough to work, and finally be excreted.

There is, of course, a snag. The *ras*-inhibitors do not actually kill tumours, but simply hold their growth in check. They may need to be used as a follow-up to more traditional treatments, or be given to

patients over many years, which poses difficult problems unless they are entirely free of side-effects.

Meanwhile, other groups are tackling other cancer genes, of which about 70 have so far been discovered. Cancer researchers are used to the sinking feeling that follows when the latest great idea fails to work as well as they had hoped — but this time there is a lot of optimism, not least because only tiny amounts of the inhibitors are needed to stop cancer cells from proliferating.

"If we can get these drugs into patients, I think the data will show the concept is right," Dr Edward Scolnick of Merck told *The Wall Street Journal*. "Right now, we're at an unbelievably exciting and frustrating stage of drug discovery. We just have to be patient and wait."



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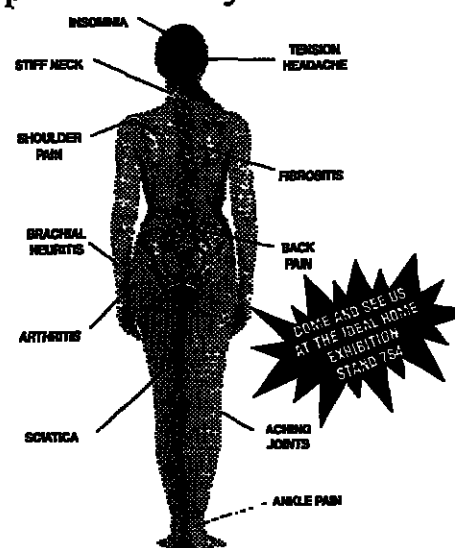
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TO MOSCOW

Clinton is right to join Russia's Victory Day

There are at least ten million reasons for President Clinton to be in Moscow on May 9, as Russians celebrate the 50th anniversary of a victory achieved at terrible human and material cost. To refuse would have been worse than a diplomatic snub to the Yeltsin Government. To ordinary Russians, Victory Day is a sacred national holiday which has assumed particular psychological importance as a rallying point for national pride in the midst of economic hardships and political uncertainties. By deciding to visit Kiev as well, Mr Clinton underlines the historical symbolism of his presence.

Insults to national pride are often remembered long after political disputes have faded. The exclusion of Russia from last year's D-Day events was widely and keenly resented. Wartime intra-Allied arguments about delays in opening a Western front were revived, and in Russia, there is still little quarrel with Stalin's assertion that Soviet soldiers were left to bear the lion's share of casualties. For Mr Clinton to have pleaded "scheduling problems" on this, the 50th anniversary of Hitler's defeat, would have struck many ordinary Russians as a calculated insult to their dead, and persuaded them that President Yeltsin was right to give warning, last December in Budapest, of "a cold peace" with the West.

There were good reasons, too, for Washington to hesitate before taking up Mr Yeltsin's invitation. The first is that it was issued in January, when Russian troops were pulverising Grozny. With the fighting in Chechnya far from ended, and human rights violations continuing, the White House was understandably nervous that television coverage of Mr Clinton reviewing a Russian military march-past would be accompanied by footage of slain Chechens. But Mr Yeltsin has eliminated the possibility of such embarrassment. There will now be two parades, in different parts of Moscow. The

one to which foreign leaders are invited will consist of Second World War veterans only.

The second factor to be taken into account was that this is to be a working summit, as well as a ceremonial occasion. With Republicans threatening to cut already pledged aid, notably money to rehouse Russian troops withdrawn from the Baltics, unless the Administration demonstrated firmness in dealing with Moscow, the White House needed to assess the prospects for a successful outcome with particular care.

There is a portfolio of important issues on which America and Russia are sharply at odds: they include the expansion of Nato, Bosnia, the maintenance of sanctions against Iraq, and Russia's contract with Iran to rebuild a nuclear plant. Anxiety has also been mounting in Washington that Mr Yeltsin will be tempted to defer or cancel parliamentary elections this December and the presidential elections due next June.

Many of these arguments are too intractable to be solved at this summit. But that is why they must not even appear to be neglected by Washington, and it matters that Mr Yeltsin clearly wants a meeting enough to make energetic overtures, even suggesting that the two sides start work on a third Start treaty on nuclear disarmament. Precisely because the days when Moscow could confidently be assumed to attach priority to working with Washington in international affairs are over, this is a strategic relationship that urgently needs tending.

Mr Clinton will not attend the VE celebrations in London, Paris or Berlin. Whatever the day-to-day diplomatic difficulties, the capitals have no need of such symbolism, and it is nothing but reasonable for an American President to wish to be with his own people on this anniversary. The next step for John Major, who also has his invitation to Moscow, is to announce promptly that he too will be there.

HOW NOT TO

A general lesson in maladministration from the CSA

There can be no better example of good policy being translated into bad practice than the setting-up of the Child Support Agency. An excellent notion, supported by all parties, that absent parents should pay a realistic amount towards the upbringing of their children, became a saga of administrative incompetence, ministerial ineptitude and crass injustice. Yesterday's report on the CSA from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration must be one of the toughest cross-party indictments of government in modern times.

The select committee finds it astonishing that the Department of Social Security, in setting up the CSA, did not learn lessons from the debacle that followed the introduction of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in 1992. Unacceptable delays in the processing of claims when that new benefit was introduced led to great distress and hardship. At the time, this committee wrote: "In future we expect there to be much greater preparedness, training and contingency planning before embarking on major projects." There was not. That the same department was responsible for the shambles of the CSA suggests a reluctance to learn from past mistakes that would lead to bankruptcy in a private company.

Yesterday's report paints a picture of an agency that was doomed from the start. Forced to meet stringent financial targets by the Treasury, it sacrificed quality of service for quantity. The Ombudsman, in a report published in January, found "mistaken identity, inadequate procedures, failure to answer correspondence, incorrect or misleading advice, delay in the assessment and review of child support maintenance, and in its payment to the parent with care". The Chief Child Support Officer examined 1,380 maintenance assessment decisions and found only 545 of them to be correct. The

committee concludes: "The work of the CSA touches on the most difficult and sensitive aspect of many people's lives. The Agency should not add to the individual's distress by sloppy procedures, carelessness, delay, inattention or incompetence." It did.

The CSA's staff were given far too little training for the job: only six weeks to start with, even though the maintenance calculations were exceedingly complex. The Ombudsman had already criticised the department for training DLA staff inadequately. The new head of the CSA, Alan Chant, admitted in evidence to the committee that the DSS "always found... a period of about 10, 12, 13 weeks will be required to train people... before they are allowed to start handling cases in earnest". It would not have needed hindsight for ministers to spot this problem before it arose.

Officials blame the extent of public opposition to the CSA for many of its failings. Yet that hostility could have been foreseen — and need not have been so great had the grip of the Treasury been resisted. In Australia and New Zealand, child support was introduced relatively peacefully because, crucially, it dealt only with new cases. Retrospective legislation is bad law: it is unpopular because it is unjust. To ask the CSA to reopen cases where a clean-break settlement had already been agreed was bound to produce outrage.

Had the Treasury allowed the CSA to assess only new cases, had it set a target that emphasised efficient service to the public over cost savings, had it given the CSA a realistic budget for staff and training, a good idea might just have been turned into good policy. DSS ministers carry blame too for failing to spot the inadequacies in time and for designing too rigid a formula for the CSA to follow. All ministers and senior civil servants should now be obliged to use the CSA as a case study in bad government.

AS MERIT ORDERS

The Queen pays tribute to a gracious Mandela

"Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika," said the Queen at the end of her address yesterday to South Africa's Parliament. By her invocation of the poignant Xhosa anthem, she left no one in doubt that she endorsed the direction taken by the country in striving "to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable".

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black President, was acclaimed not by gracious words alone. The Queen chose also to decorate him in a manner commensurate with his stature as one of the foremost statesmen of the age. In bestowing on him the Order of Merit — an honour held only by the Queen was equally apparent in his words on the receiving the Order. His admiration for the Queen was equally apparent in his words on the Radio Four's Today programme, when he told his interlocutor that he had "always admired the British Royal Family," and that he "admired the Queen's character and the Queen's sitting down and entertaining" the Queen in South Africa had always been one of his "great ambitions".

In paying eloquent homage to the Queen, Mr Mandela has chosen to salute the values of an older Commonwealth.

country. These values are those which, in the words of the Queen, will permit South Africa to "fulfil the most fundamental ideals with dignity", and to ensure that the country is one where "the word and spirit are free".

The Queen was last in South Africa in February 1947. The Empire was on the cusp of momentous change: India was to attain its independence only a few months later, and South Africa was soon to institute the political philosophy — apartheid — which would earn the country the scorn of the international community.

Mr Mandela was then just 30 years of age and had — with Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu — formed the African National Congress only three years earlier. In spite of the radicalism with which he was then imbued, he chose to remember with affection yesterday the last visit to South Africa of a British monarch. "We worshipped the British Royal Family," he declared, in words that were as generous as they were politic.

At a time when more recent political arrangements have held Britain in an ugly vice — and have compelled us, for example, to spurn Canada's claims in its fishing dispute with Spain — the Queen's visit to South Africa serves to remind us of the tenacity of our primordial ties and the value of an older Commonwealth.

Positive nuclear arms control

From Lord Healey and others

Sir, In a few weeks, one of the most important events in the 20th century will take place at the United Nations in New York. Beginning on April 17, the 172 states party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which entered into force in 1970, will decide how to extend the treaty.

We write to urge the Government to act more positively than it is currently doing to ensure that the treaty is strengthened and accorded a long-term extension. The NPT is by far the most important legal impediment to the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Equally, without it, the nuclear-weapon states would be under no obligation to "pursue negotiations in good faith" to reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear weapons.

Recent Russian and American statements have reiterated that they understand the goal of the NPT is a nuclear-weapon free world, as set out in article VI. While not going this far, the Prime Minister said in Budapest on December 5 last year that the treaty provides "the only internationally agreed framework for negotiations on nuclear disarmament".

Regrettably, however, in our view, the Prime Minister leads a government which is refusing to take advantage of this framework. In 1993-94, for example, along with China, Britain wished to continue nuclear testing when the US, Russia and France had stopped. Now, it is contributing to the unfortunate delay in concluding a comprehensive test ban treaty — a stated objective of the NPT — by continuing to insist on "safety tests" which would rob the agreement of much of its value.

Even more seriously, the Government gives no indication of being willing to enter British strategic nuclear forces into negotiations, despite its treaty obligations, invitations from the UN Secretary-General and President Yeltsin, and, reportedly, some private urging from the US.

This abrogation of treaty responsibilities is compounded by the fact that the UK is in the process of replacing its existing Polaris submarines with a Trident fleet which the Government is proposing to arm with up to twice as many warheads, capable of hitting many more targets.

Such actions — or inaction — drain the Prime Minister's words of much of their meaning. Unless the Government takes a more active approach to nuclear arms control, and in particular announces its preparedness to enter disarmament negotiations, a successful extension and subsequent strengthening of the NPT will be put in doubt.

A pro-disarmament approach will enhance this country's security far more than excessive numbers of missiles and warheads.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS HEALEY,
WAYLAND KENNET,
CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW,
House of Lords,
March 16.

Official welcome

From Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm Hitchcott

Sir, That Canon Tolley can refer to guards of honour as "meaningless" symbolism (letter, March 15) takes little account of the biblical importance of entry points to strategic areas such as cities.

In Old Testament times, goods were bought and sold at the city gates and important legal matters were dealt with inside them (Ruth iv, 11). We learn very early on in the Scriptures (Genesis xxi, 17) that the city gates were symbols of power and authority. Those who controlled the gates controlled entry to and exit from the city: thus it was the city elders who sat at the gates to exercise their authority there (Proverbs xxi, 23). Additionally, since the gates were of such strategic importance, it was necessary to provide guards to maintain control of them.

Today ports, airports and other points of entry or welcome are to be regarded as symbolic of gates, and the "turning out of the guard" is a compliment from the one exercising authority at the gates to a visiting dignitary or authority.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM HITCHCOTT,
12 Eggars Hill,
Aldershot, Hampshire,
March 15.

Desert island quizzing

From Mr John Spencer

Sir, How odd of Brenda Maddox (article, March 15) to compare the treatment of Eric Hobsbawm on *Desert Island Discs* with Galileo's persecution by the Inquisition. Is Ms Maddox saying that Hobsbawm's obstinate attachment to Stalin and his successors is as valid as Galileo's defence of scientific truth? One would love to hear what Galileo thought of that idea.

Yours sincerely,
J. R. SPENCER,
38 Earlsfield Road, SW18.

Business letters, page 25

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to 0171 767 0145.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Screening of euthanasia film sharpens public debate

From Sir Ludovic Kennedy

Sir, The early day motion signed by more than a hundred anxious MPs and the letter from Dr Twycross, the Archbishop of York and others (report, March 15; letter, March 16) not only deplored the BBC's screening of the Dutch film *Death on Request* before they had even seen it but made scathing comments on what to expect if voluntary euthanasia was ever permitted here.

The most damaging and misleading of these was the charge that in Holland euthanasia is routinely practised without the patient's consent, thus giving the impression that doctors there are acting irresponsibly.

But people should know there is one situation in all Western countries when involuntary euthanasia is often given: this is when the patient has only hours to live, is no longer able to give consent, but whose grieving relatives, unwilling to tolerate his (and their own) sufferings any more, beg the doctor to help him on his way.

Doctors here can do this within the law because of the double effects of diamorphine: a controlled dose alleviates pain, a massive dose can end life. Who is to say what the doctor's intention is?

The same let-out clause applies to cases of voluntary euthanasia, now being increasingly administered here, although still a criminal offence. A recent report in the *British Medical Journal* told of more than 30 per cent of 138 Cambridgeshire doctors canvassed admitting in confidence to hastening the deaths of patients in terminal decline who had requested it. Other doctors have told me the same.

Most deaths are good deaths. But there will always be a small but growing number of patients like the one in *Death on Request*, being slowly suffocated by motor neurone disease or the young girl mentioned in the discussion after the film whose body had been so eaten away by cancer that she was vomiting her own faeces, for whom nothing more can be done.

If the opponents of voluntary euthanasia have their way, patients will be condemned to further suffering however good the quality of palliative care. Surely it is time for the position to be regularised so that, given adequate safeguards, those doctors who say they would be prepared to administer voluntary euthanasia, once it was per-

mitted, can be enabled to do so, and those who are breaking the law by practising it now can be relieved of the fear of criminal prosecution.

Yours etc,
LUDOVIC KENNEDY,
Ashdown, Avebury, Wiltshire,
March 19.

From Mr Thomas E. Woodsend

Sir, It was entirely proper for the signatories to a letter on March 16 opposing the screening of a proposed TV programme on euthanasia to express their views. I found it puzzling, though, that the signatories should say that discussion is to be encouraged but then deplore this one contribution to the debate for its one-sidedness.

I saw the programme and it seemed low-key and in good taste. No doubt it was widely watched. One wonders whether any of the signatories to the letter saw it too and perhaps changed their views.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS E. WOODSEND,
7 Belmont Road,
Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire,
March 17.

From Mr Luke Gormally

Sir, Your Health Services Correspondent reports (March 15) the BBC as saying that the film *Death on Request* is neither for nor against euthanasia. In the context of public debate in this country about the legalisation of euthanasia, and the frequently heard claim that Dutch practice is exemplary, the BBC's statement is disingenuous.

By concentrating on only one case the film could convey the impression that the practice of euthanasia in Holland conforms to the guidelines established there by the courts to ensure that euthanasia remained voluntary. The impression is deceptive.

On a conservative estimate at least 10,558 patients in Holland were intentionally killed by their doctors in 1990, almost one in 12 deaths from all causes in that year. More than half of those killings (5,450) were cases of non-voluntary euthanasia. Holland's supposedly strict guidelines for the practice of euthanasia have never been enforceable, so that it is unsurprising that non-voluntary euthanasia has secured a firm place in Dutch medical practice.

Since 1988, working parties of the Royal Dutch Medical Association have condoned the killing, in certain circumstances, of handicapped newborn babies, patients in persistent coma, and patients with advanced dementia. This position is indeed logical, since if euthanasia is truly a benefit it must seem unreasonable to deprive patients of it just because they are incompetent.

The signatories of Mrs Marion Roe's early day motion in the House of Commons, as well as Dr Twycross and his co-signatories, have their facts right about Dutch euthanasia.

Yours sincerely,
LUKE GORMALLY
(Director),
The Linacre Centre,
60 Grove End Road, NWS,
March 16.

From Dr C. D. Lacey

Sir, While watching the patient, his wife and the doctor struggling with the problems of euthanasia on *Death on Request* last night, I longed to gather them all up and bring them over to a hospice in this country.

The patient appeared to be offered no help other than the stark choice between euthanasia and an eventual agonising death, possibly by suffocation, accompanied by pain of increasing severity. How different would be this outlook in any hospice here.

He could be assured that he need not suffer any further pain, his distress would be significantly relieved by the appropriate doses of sedatives and he would certainly not be allowed to die struggling for breath. Most importantly, he would be offered skilled nursing and moral, mental and, if required, spiritual support.

Finally, rather than his doctor feeling exhausted and unable to sleep after his death, and his wife having to be asked if she felt she had really done the right thing, they both could enjoy the peace of mind coming from helping him to achieve a peaceful and dignified end: a true *euthanasia*, or good death.

Yours truly,
C. D. LACEY
(Trustee and past medical director),
St Wilfrid's Hospice,
Grosvenor Road,
Chichester, West Sussex,
March 16.

Export ban on anti-personnel mines

From Mr Rae McGrath

Sir, Yesterday's announcement by Mr David Davis, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (report, March 16), that Britain had banned the export of "non-detectable" anti-personnel mines, is meaningless.

Britain has never made such mines, nor does it have any plans to do so, and Mr Davis's announcement signals no more than a continuation of the deliberate Government policy, led by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office, to counter the growing campaign to ban the production, export and use of anti-personnel mines.

The strategy is to convince the people of this country that the Government is responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the trade in, and use of, these weapons, while ensuring that in reality nothing changes.

At a recent DTI briefing it was stated that, on the advice of the Ministry of Defence, the Department does not classify the HB876, a mine that Britain

does make, as a "mine" for export purposes. The manufacturers, Hunting Engineering, are less coy, however. They boast in their promotional literature that the HB876 area-denial mine can be "activated randomly", that it is "exceptionally difficult to clear", can "disable clearance vehicles" and is a "long-lasting threat".

It is reassuring to read, in the same report, that Baroness Chalker recognises the need to fund mine clearance programmes — we would welcome the Overseas Development Administration if it decides to join our campaign.

The ODA appears to be alone among government departments in recognising the suffering and misery caused among refugees and poor farming communities by these unacceptable weapons.

Yours faithfully,
RAE McGRATH
(Director), Mines Advisory Group,
54a Main Street,
Cockermouth, Cumbria,
March 16.

Pakistan's problems

From Sir Gerard Vaughan, MP for Reading East (Conservative)

Sir, It is not for me to defend or fight the battles of the Prime Minister of Pakistan (report, February 18; leading article, March 9; letter, March 15). What is important, however, is to be fair and balanced. As Foreign Office Minister, Tony Baldry, MP, said in the House of Commons, on March 1, "this is not the time to turn our backs on Pakistan". Pakistan and Prime Minister Bhutto face considerable problems, but with our help and support we will enable them to overcome these.

Your leader implies disapproval of Ms Bhutto for the frequency of her overseas travel. The objective of these visits is to attract foreign investment. Indeed, during her recent visit to London, the Government of Pakistan signed memoranda of understanding worth £1 billion with British investors.

Ms Bhutto's aim is to generate em-

ployment at home, so that she can redress the socio-economic disparities that are, in part, responsible for the present unrest. She has taken a number of steps to bring an end to the turmoil including a crackdown on Islamic militancy.

In your report Ms Bhutto is criticised for failing to redress "the institutionalised persecution of women". This is incorrect. A number of steps have been taken, including the introduction of police stations run by and for women; the establishment of women's banks; the appointment of women judges to the higher courts and the intended recruitment of 20,000 women health visitors, social workers and paramedics.

That Pakistan does have problems cannot be denied. However, it should also be acknowledged that the Government is intent on tackling them.

Yours faithfully,
GERARD VAUGHAN
(Member, Britain-Pakistan Group),
House of Commons.

Moses unadopted

From Mr Bernard G. Hart

Sir, You reported (March 9) that the painting *The Finding of Moses* by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, which is expected to fetch \$25-\$3 million when it goes on sale in May, was discovered "dumped in an alley" in St James's "shortly after being sold by the Newman Gallery" in the late 1950s.

As a former director of M. Newman Ltd, I recall that Newman had purchased this picture at the sale of F. W. Reeves of Wolverhampton in 1950 and sold it straight away to a collector. Early in 1960 our client moved to a smaller house and asked us to sell it, along with *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, which also had come from the Newman collection.

We had both pictures on show in the gallery for about six months but no buyers were forthcoming so the owner decided to put them up for sale at Christie's in December 1960. Both were unsold. Our client then asked me to offer both pictures, without charge, to any museum or public building.

I remember writing many letters trying to give them away but no one wanted them. Eventually they went to New York where they were sold.

I have never heard the story about *The Finding of Moses* once being abandoned in an alley and if this is true then Newman had no part in its recovery.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD HART,
Newhart (Pictures) Ltd,
PO Box 1608, London NW1 3LR.

Beds for acutely ill

From Dr Andrew Lawson

Sir, Amid the political point-scoring that surrounds the recent transport of a critically head-injured patient from Kent to Leeds (letters, March 14), an important point seems to have been missed.

Whilst there may not have been a bed on an intensive care unit (ICU) in London or the home counties, I cannot believe that there was no facility that could have operated to remove the clot from the patient's brain.

The widely acknowledged lack of intensive care services, and the consequent scarcity of beds, do not mean that a patient cannot be operated on as an emergency, particularly where a delay is potentially life-threatening.

I have this week had to move patients across London from our ICU in the middle of the night to facilitate emergency admissions.

It is not an optimal situation, but if emergency surgery is required we operate first and then find an ICU bed for the patient during or after surgery. A stable patient in the post-operative period presents a better risk for transport than one whose condition is deteriorating.

Yours etc,
ANDREW LAWSON
(Consultant,
Intensive Care Unit),
Magill Department of Anaesthetics,
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital,
369 Fulham Road, SW10,
March 10.

Loss of the Cross

From the Reverend Alan Robson

Sir, It is typical of the candyfloss religion that passes for Christianity these days that the Church's advisers should dispense with the Crucifixion, with which most people could identify and which almost certainly happened, in favour of a miraculous Resurrection, which is beyond anyone's experience and which almost certainly didn't (report, March 10; letters, March 14).

Yours faithfully,
ALAN ROBSON,
The Rectory,
Wrotham, Kent,
March 10.

Liquid assets

From Mr John R. Brown

Sir, May I, through your columns, express my gratitude to Allied Domecq for yet another increase in the price of beer in my local pub. As a result of this my consumption has decreased substantially. My purse, and presumably my liver, are benefitting considerably. Perhaps I'll survive ten years longer — I doubt if the sixteenth-century pub will.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BROWN,
Bookham Grove House,
Great Bookham, Surrey,
March 15.



LAW 29

Proper legal advice: are police opposing it?



ARTS 33-35

Sir Georg Solti turns impresario to promote new talent



SPORT 36-40

Ince dropped from England squad for Uruguay match

EXECUTIVE PAY UNDER REVIEW AGAIN
Page 25

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

TUESDAY MARCH 21 1995

Engineering out of recession at last

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

FOR the first time since the recession hit in the early 1990s, UK engineering employment is now rising, according to the latest business trends survey from the EEF engineering employers.

The engineering industry leaders yesterday told Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, on the basis of the survey findings, that overall economic recovery is now developing in a way that will secure longer-term prosperity.

Previous surveys — designed as a

quick "snapshot" of the industry — suggested that increased employment in smaller firms in the industry was being offset by continuing cut-backs in larger companies.

But yesterday's study of almost 1,800 engineering companies, carried out over the past four weeks, showed that one in three firms is now increasing its employment levels, while only 18 per cent are cutting them — a positive balance between the two of 16 per cent.

Seasonally adjusted, the EEF said, this suggested a final figure for the period of 21 per cent, which marked a

"distinct, progressive improvement in engineering employment". In addition, output and new orders continue to increase strongly, with positive balances of 36 per cent of companies in each case reporting rises. Some interpretations of recent EEF figures have been gloomy, but officials said these figures "dispel recent doubts about the strength of recovery in the engineering and related industries".

All regions reported growth, with Western and East Anglian regions showing above-average improvement, while the North West is showing below-average growth. Cap-

ital investment plans were said to be on a "firm" upward trend, and capacity utilisation was "creeping up".

Graham Mackenzie, EEF director-general, described the results as excellent news and said they put aside "the fears aroused by recent economic statistics of a possible downturn in engineering production".

In a letter detailing the results to the Chancellor, Mr Mackenzie welcomed the "rebalancing" of the economy away from "unsustainably high" consumer spending and towards increased export growth and hopes now of higher business invest-

ment. He said: "The EEF believes that the UK economy is now developing in exactly the way which is needed to secure longer-term prosperity."

Export confidence among small and medium-size companies is at its highest for almost two years, according to a survey by the Small Business Research Trust for The Royal Bank of Scotland. According to the survey, almost half the companies are more optimistic about the coming year than they were three months ago, while only 8 per cent are more pessimistic.

British Rail rolling stock for sale

By Ross Tieman
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH RAIL'S entire stock of 12,000 locomotives and passenger coaches was offered for sale yesterday in a privatisation expected to net about £1.5 billion for assets with a book value estimated at £3 billion.

Would-be bidders are being invited to signal their interest in three rolling-stock leasing companies with combined annual revenues of £800 million.

Angel Train Contracts, Eversholt Leasing and Porterbrook will rent their trains to the 25 passenger franchised train-operating companies that will run services over Railtrack's network under the privatisation plan.

Each of the rolling-stock companies will have its revenues largely protected for eight to ten years by contracts. Maintenance of the trains will be carried out under a second series of contracts, lasting up to four years, with BR depots, which are also being privatised.

The rolling stock companies are likely to prove the biggest single source of revenue for the Treasury arising from rail privatisation, apart from the £1.4 billion flotation of Railtrack planned for next spring.

Train-builders, leasing companies, venture capitalists and institutional investors worldwide have been approached by the Government's advisor, Hambros Bank. Buyout offers will also be considered.

Government advisors appear to expect several consortium bids for the rolling stock companies. Because Britain is at the forefront of worldwide experiments with railway privatisation, the sale is expected to attract strong interest from leading world-wide players in train building, such as GEC-Alsthom, ABB Daimler-Benz Transportation, and Siemens, of Germany.

Hambros pre-qualification document, published yesterday, shows that ownership of the trains has been divided so that, in most cases, an operating company wishing to procure trains to run its services will have a choice of only two suppliers.

Pennington, page 23
Rail bazaar, page 25

BUSINESS TODAY

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FT-SE All share 1927.85 (+13.89)
Nikkei 16129.96 (-121.27)
New York 4074.69 (+1.04)
S&P Composite 485.46 (-1.06)

Federal Funds 5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond 102 1/2% (103%)
Yield 7.38% (7.37%)

3-month Interbank 6 1/4% (6 1/4%)
Libor long 100 (102 1/2%)

New York 1.5807* (1.5840)

London 1.5799 (1.5825)

DM 2.2140 (2.1910)

FF 7.8805 (7.8500)

SP 1.8382 (1.8200)

Yen 141.24 (140.82)

S Index 84.6 (84.4)

Tokyo close Yen 89.33

London close \$382.35 (\$383.15)

* denotes midday trading price

Wembley rescue looks near

A FINANCIAL rescue plan for Wembley, the leisure group that owns the west London sports stadium, is expected to emerge by the start of next week, if agreement can be reached with banks owed £130 million (Martin Waller writes).

Wembley shares were suspended at 6p yesterday after news of some of the terms of the reconstruction leaked out. Directors said the board was "close to finalising the terms for a reconstruction".

The plan is thought to be a conversion of some debt into new shares to be held by the banks, along with a rights issue to raise fresh funds of perhaps £60 million. The reconstruction has been a slow and tortuous process, but advisers to the company were insisting last night terms would at last be issued shortly. Pennington, page 23

Gloom over slump in home loans

By Janet Bush, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

MORTGAGE lending plunged lower last month than levels seen during the depths of the recession, according to figures released yesterday. These prompted the head of the Building Societies Association to warn his members that the housing market is unlikely to see any growth in prices or transactions this year.

The housing market remains in the doldrums and is likely to remain subdued for the rest of this year as home-owners struggle with higher taxes and interest rates and very low income growth. Total building society and bank mortgage lending slumped 15 per cent last month to about £1.1 billion, down from £1.3 billion a year ago.

The Building Societies Asso-

ciation said that net new commitments of mortgage money slumped to £2.7 billion in February, down 8 per cent from a year ago and even lower than that seen in 1991 and 1992. Net lending was also lower this February than it was a year ago.

Adrian Coles, Director-General of the BSA, said: "It is becoming clear that neither prices nor transactions will show any significant growth in 1995, compared with 1994." He added that there might be some increased activity in the housing market in the traditionally busy spring months.

Other figures showed that mortgage lending by banks is also weak. The British Bankers' Association said growth in mortgage lending decelerated in every month for a year.

Mortgage lending rose £597 million in February compared with fairly consistent rises of £650 million a month in previous months.

A survey of estate agents by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors published today shows that 15 per cent reported a drop in prices over the past three months and less than 5 per cent said that prices had gone up.

Yesterday's lending figures, which include M4 money supply and lending from the Bank of England, indicate that companies are still not borrowing the kind of amounts that suggest an imminent investment boom. And, although consumers seem to be borrowing more heavily, most observers believe this probably represents a desire to spread payments for goods over a few months and "distressed borrowing" because consumers cannot afford to finance their purchases with cash.

The BBA reported that consumer credit has continued to accelerate and rose £249 million in February. Half of this rise was on credit cards. But Tim Sweeney, Director-General of the BBA, said it was debatable whether this reflected growing consumer confidence or involuntary borrowing. Total lending by major banks to individuals and companies rose a seasonally adjusted £2.96 billion in February, almost the same as in January.

There was some evidence that companies have started to borrow again, with borrowing by manufacturers rising £108 million in February. However, a great deal went to securities dealers, easily reversed one week to the next.

M4 lending rose £3.6 billion in February compared with the rise of £4.6 billion in January. The M4 measure rose 0.6 per cent, taking its annual rate of growth to 4.6 per cent from 4.2 per cent in January. However, its three-month growth rate remained the same at 5.6 per cent.

Building societies had good news on savings with a net inflow of £519 million, only slightly down on the £576 million in January in spite of the power privatisation.

Sterling showed little reaction to the figures, moving higher as dealers took profits on the mark. Its trade-weighted index closed at 84.6 from Friday's close of 84.4.



Powering on: George Simpson, left, and John Grant at Lucas's diesel-pump factory

Lucas factories flat out with record order book

By Martin Waller

A SHARP burst of new orders for its automotive components sent sales and profits surging at Lucas Industries, the engineer, which has reported orders at record levels and factories working flat out to cope with demand.

Sales at Lucas's automotive operations were 20 per cent higher in the first half of the financial year, to January 31, and this helped to power pre-tax profits ahead from £20.1 million to £44.5 million.

But Lucas still can see no end to one of its most pressing corporate problems, the dis-

pute with the US Defence Department over two contracts that went sour. The quarrel has led to a ban on other defence work and £20 million of fines.

George Simpson, the Lucas chief executive, said: "In our shareholders' interest it would be very, very wrong indeed to rush into a settlement that wasn't an economic one."

Mr Simpson and John Grant, finance director, are holding the interim dividend at 2.1p, but for the first time in some years, this is now

covered by earnings, which rose from 1.7p to 2.9p.

The automotive division more than doubled operating profits to £56 million even before the benefits came in from recent big contract wins such as that for £1 billion to supply Volkswagen with diesel fuel injector systems. Further orders are expected from other motor manufacturers.

But profits from aerospace activities were barely changed at £9 million, on sales 7 per cent lower.

Tempus, page 24

Halifax free shares verdict on Monday

By Robert Miller

MORE than two million Halifax and Leeds Permanent borrowers will have to wait until Monday to learn whether they are entitled to free shares after the two societies have merged and sought a stock market listing as Halifax plc.

As a two-day hearing in the High Court started yesterday, the two societies faced the Building Societies Commission, the regulator, in a "friendly" action. The commission wants to ensure the proposed handout of free shares to as many members of both societies as possible does not breach the 1986 Building Societies Act. So far there have been two

different court interpretations. Abbey National successfully argued that all members of the former society could receive free shares. However, Cheltenham & Gloucester had to change its initial proposal to include borrowers in a £1.8 billion cash payout from Lloyds Bank. The two cases are covered by different sections of the Act.

□ This Saturday, dissatisfied C&G members will attend an extra meeting which the society was forced to call. One resolution calls on C&G to find some way to benefit borrowers and members of less than two years standing.

Zeneca duo rewarded under Greenbury

By George Sivel

TWO directors of a company whose remuneration committee is chaired by Sir Richard Greenbury, the Marks & Spencer chairman who is also handling the Government inquiry into executive pay, shared profits on share options of more than £300,000 last year.

Yesterday's annual report and accounts of Zeneca, the drug company floated off from ICI in 1993, also show that David Barnes, 59, the company's chief executive, took a 37 per cent rise in basic pay. The comparison is exaggerated, however, by 1993 pay being calculated from the February appointment of executives before the June merger.

The accounts record that Peter Doyle, 56, research and development director, made a likely profit of £211,175 on share options. They also show that Tony Rodgers, 54, director of human resources and public affairs, made a likely profit of £314,023 on share options. Zeneca is chaired by Sir

Denys Henderson, who is also a member of the Greenbury committee on executive pay. He took a rise in basic pay of 30 per cent from £244,000 to £319,000.

The Zeneca accounts, which will land on shareholders' doormats this week, show a total pay rise for Sir Denys from £324,000 for 1993 to £342,000 for 1994. The total emoluments of Mr Barnes have risen from £373,000 to £435,000. However, the bonus paid to Mr Barnes has fallen from £72,000 in 1993 to £22,000 in 1994.

Zeneca said last night that its executive bonuses had gone down during 1994. The company also said that the options exercised during 1994 "were the culmination of schemes run over a period of years". The company added that no options were granted to directors during 1994 under the option scheme introduced last year.

Pay row simmers, page 25

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Bass wins US court settlement

Bass, the brewing and hotels group, has agreed to a "favourable settlement" in a legal action against US-based Promus Companies, connected with Bass's purchase of Holiday Inn hotels. Bass brought the action in New York in 1992 to enforce "certain terms" in the 1990 merger agreement, under which Bass acquired the Holiday Inn hotel chain in North America.

Terms of the settlement were confidential, but Bass said the amount involved did not exceed 2 per cent of group net assets and was therefore "not material" in the context of the group. Payment by Promus will compensate for the Bass claims and cover all outstanding tax issues, together with all legal costs, Bass said.

Law advances

Law Debenture, the international investment trust, lifted its 1994 total dividend to 20.5p (19.25p) after reporting that investment income and deposits rose to £5.9 million against £5.4 million, while income from trustee work advanced to £6.6 million (£6.2 million). Overall, pre-tax profits increased to £7.1 million (£6.7 million).

Erith build-up

Erith, the builders merchant, said sales for the first two months of the current year were 10 per cent ahead of the opening weeks of 1994, although the underlying rate of growth after price inflation was probably closer to 5 per cent. In 1994, Erith lifted taxable profits to £2.52 million (£1.09 million). Total payout is increased to 2.25p from 1p, with a 1.5p final, due May 5.

VCI ahead

VCI, the video and audio publishing group, whose chairman is Michael Grade, reported taxable profits of £6.9 million for 1994, compared with pro-forma profits of £5.2 million in 1993, adjusted after last year's flotation. There is a 4.2p final dividend.

Alcan set to dispose of peripheral operations

By ERIC REGULY

ALCAN, the Canadian aluminium company, said yesterday that it intends to sell its non-core businesses in Britain, which have about 4,200 employees and assets of almost £200 million.

The sale represents the biggest opportunity in years to gain broad exposure to a wide variety of fabricated aluminium products, from household foil for cooking to aviation plate.

A spokesman for British Alcan said that Lazard Brothers, its financial adviser, has held a number of "very serious" discussions with potential buyers, all of them based in Britain. They include venture capital groups as well as metals companies.

The sale is expected to be completed in the summer for a price near the portfolio's book value of £200 million.

Alcan wants to sell the 12 companies in its "downstream" portfolio to a single buyer. A quick sale would enable it to take advantage of fairly strong demand and the long-awaited recovery in prices.

A tonne of aluminium is now worth about £1,800 compared with last year's price of £1,200 or less.

The companies on the auction block have combined annual sales of £400 million and trade from 35 locations in Britain, one in Ireland and seven in America.

They include Alcan Consumer Products, the market leader in household foil, Luxfer Gas Cylinders, which makes high-pressure gas cylinders, Baco Contracts, an aluminium structures contractor, and Alcan Plate, a maker of alloy plate for the defence industry.

The portfolio is said to be profitable, though industry experts think that it was likely that it lost money during the recession.

British Alcan, which includes the larger smelting, rolling and chemicals opera-

tions, reported a pre-tax profit of £31 million in 1994 compared to a loss of £22.7 million the year before.

The sale comes as no surprise. In late 1993, Alcan announced that it would concentrate on its core "upstream" businesses — bauxite refining, smelting and manufacturing rolled products such as thin aluminium for beverage cans and cars.

Since then, it has sold operations around the world, including Alcan Australia and a variety of building products, extrusion and distribution companies in North America. Charles Belbin, a company spokesman in Montreal, said: "The United Kingdom companies are not in keeping with our new strategy of focusing on our core businesses."

When the sale is completed, British Alcan will consist of Alcan Smelting, which has three smelters, Alcan Rolled Products and Alcan Chemicals Europe.

The group has 2,800 employees and a turnover of £450 million. The sale will not affect Alcan's research centre in Banbury.



Bon appetit: Neville Abraham, chairman, left, and Lawrence Isaacson, his deputy, at Groupe Chez Gerard, the restaurant chain. Maiden dividend is 0.75p from EPS of 3.8p (same) on pre-tax profits of £1.07 million (£810,000) in 26 weeks to December 25

Edinburgh Oil & Gas plans option scheme

By CARL MORTSHED

EDINBURGH Oil & Gas is asking shareholders to approve a new option scheme that could involve the issue of shares worth 3 per cent of the company to its management.

The new scheme will be based on the progress of the company with the grant of options dependent on a 25 per cent increase in the price of Edinburgh Oil & Gas shares, which stood at 20p yesterday.

Alf Bisset, managing director, said yesterday that the directors control about one million of the 34 million

shares in issue, suggesting that the board could almost double its stake if the options are fully granted. Mr Bisset owns about 800,000 shares and took up his full entitlement in the company's share placing in March.

The USM-quoted Edinburgh, which plans a full listing this year, turned a first-half loss in 1994 into a full-year pre-tax profit of £185,000 (£161,000). Earnings per share fell from 0.95p to 0.6p because of the share issue. There is no dividend.

Simon reduces losses and prunes gearing

By PHILIP PANGALOS

THE benefits of restructuring and cost cutting undertaken since new management came aboard at Simon Engineering helped the group to continue its recovery in the second half of 1994, with reduced annual losses and strengthening order books.

The company, which makes access equipment, including fire rescue gear, saw pre-tax losses fall to £18 million in 1994, compared with 1993's provision-driven losses of £160.3 million. Operating profits in the second half

reached £4.3 million after a loss of £300,000 in the first half. Maurice Dixon, Simon's chief executive, said: "We said we would sort it out last year and deliver profits, and that's what we're doing."

Disposals, a rights issue and closures of loss-makers helped to cut group borrowings 40 per cent to £70.3 million, with gearing down from 264 per cent to 86 per cent. There is again no dividend, but Simon intends to resume dividend payments in the current year.

Allen backs Dreamworks with \$500m

PAUL ALLEN, the software billionaire who founded Microsoft with Bill Gates, will invest \$500 million in Dreamworks, the new entertainment company created by Steven Spielberg. Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen (Sean Mac Carthy writes).

The company said he would become the biggest outside investor with a stake of about 19 per cent. He will also sit on the board of directors.

The company was started last October in a blaze of publicity, with industry analysts predicting success. The three founders said they would retain two-thirds of the company, which has a total equity valued at \$2.7 billion.

Dreamworks will produce films, animated films, television shows, records and interactive entertainment.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Charter Group to sell Hargreaves

CHARTER GROUP is to sell Hargreaves, the aggregates company, a move which will complete the disposal of Charter's asset-based businesses. Charter shares rose from 78p to 79p yesterday on news that the company's acquisition last August of Esab, the Swedish welding group, had contributed £30 million to Charter's pre-tax profit of £54.8 million for the nine months to December.

Charter has changed its financial year end from March to December, leaving investors with no comparable profit figures. The 12-month pre-tax profit to March 1994, prior to the Esab purchase, was £24 million. Higher than expected profits from welding came largely from cost reductions put in place by Esab before the sale, although the continuing recession meant that sales in Europe were only 3 per cent ahead. Esab makes welding equipment. Earnings per share were 39.4p for the nine months and the dividend for the period is 18p.

Tempus, page 24

Ofwat extends deadline

IAN BYATT, Director-General of Water Services, has given the Monopolies and Mergers Commission another three months, until June 28, to complete its examination of the prices charged by South West Water. South West went to the MMC last year, after Mr Byatt imposed price limits that the company claimed would cripple its capital investment programme. It argued that it was in poor shape before privatisation and needed higher prices to solve problems such as discoloured water and clogged pipes.

Morgan expands in US

MORGAN CRUCIBLE, the industrial materials company, has acquired three businesses based in America for a total of \$34.6 million, funded from the proceeds of last year's disposal of Holt Lloyd. Pure Carbon, a manufacturer of seals, bearings, vanes and rotors, has been acquired for \$30 million. Diamond Corporation, a manufacturer of brush holders, was acquired for \$3 million, while Refractory Products, which makes insulating fibre shapes for industrial and high technology markets, was acquired for \$1.6 million.

Arjo sale hopes dashed

SAINT-LOUIS, the French industrial group, dashed hopes of a prompt sale of its 40 per cent interest in Arjo Wiggins Applan, the paper manufacturer. Speculation of an imminent sale lifted Arjo shares to 258p from 241p; the announcement by Saint-Louis came after stock market trading ceased. Saint-Louis also reported 1994 net profit of £1.46 billion (£1.77 billion). Net profit on ordinary activities was 37 per cent higher at £1.46 billion. Arjo's contribution was reduced to £128.4 million from £156 million. The dividend was £1.38 (£1.33).

TT rises to record £35m

TT GROUP, the acquisitive industrial holding company that has built a 4.3 per cent stake in Meggit, increased profits to a record £35.6 million before tax last year from £23.9 million previously. The company said Magnetic Materials Group and AB Electronic Products Group, acquired in 1992 and 1993 respectively, had responded well to initial cost-cutting measures. A final dividend of 3.3p a share makes 5.43p for the year, increased from an adjusted 4p last time. Earnings were 16.2p a share, compared with 12.9p.

Wilson Bowden ahead

WILSON BOWDEN, the housebuilder and property developer, raised turnover and margins in a difficult market in the year to December 31 to lift profits to £37.1 million before tax from £31.2 million. The total dividend is increased to 10.05p a share from 9.3p, with a 7.2p final, due May 26. The company sold 2,062 houses, an increase of 10.9 per cent, at an average price of £95,600 (£83,900 previously), reflecting a change in mix towards larger houses. Profits in 1993 included an exceptional pension scheme surplus of £5.5 million.

Edinburgh funds fall

A HIGHER than average exposure to the emerging markets of Asia, Pacific and Latin America was the main reason for a 14 per cent fall in the value of funds under management at Edinburgh Fund Managers to £3.4 billion. Celebrating its 25th year in business, Edinburgh yesterday reported increased pre-tax profits of £13.7 million in the year ended January 31 compared with £9.8 million. The final dividend of the international fund management group was unchanged at 10p, lifting the total payout to 24p (22p).

EBRD to meet on loan

THE ruling board of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will meet on March 27 to discuss a DM412.5 million loan to complete a Slovak nuclear plant. If approved, the loan will be the largest yet from the bank. The proposal has drawn criticism from environmentalists, who say Slovakia is better off with gas-powered energy sources. Austria has threatened to pull out of the EBRD if the loan goes through. The project is headed by Electricité de France, which is expected to contribute DM250 million.

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	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.27	2.10
Austria Sch	16.52	15.02
Belgium Fr	48.53	44.22
Canada \$	2.338	2.178
Cyprus Cyp£	0.751	0.696
Denmark Kr	9.49	8.69
Finland Mk	7.47	6.82
France Fr	6.31	7.66
Germany Dm	2.36	2.178
Greece Dr	379.00	354.00
Hong Kong \$	12.87	11.87
Ireland Pt	1.05	0.97
Israel	5.2336	4.5038
Italy Lira	2045.00	2090.00
Japan Yen	165.50	180.50
Malta	0.534	0.539
Netherlands Gld	2.625	2.395
Norway Kr	10.47	9.67
Portugal Esc	244.50	226.00
S Africa Rd	ref.	5.30
Spain Pta	208.50	196.50
Sweden Kr	12.08	11.29
Switzerland Sfr	1.936	1.78
Turkey Lira	ref.	63861.0
USA \$	1.679	1.549

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Charity Commission for England and Wales has received an application from the trustees of the **CHARITY OF THE LIVERPOOL LADIES' GUILD** for recognition of the charity under the Charities Act 1993. The Commission is considering the application and may require further information. If you are a trustee or have any information regarding the charity, please contact the Commission at 0171-782 7344.

LEGAL NOTICES

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the company is in liquidation. The liquidator is J. Clements & Company Limited, 10, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF. All claims against the company must be submitted to the liquidator by 21st April 1995.

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TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION
0171-782 7344 OR FAX: 0171-782 7827
Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 5.30pm five days prior to insertion.

Artificial rail contracts will slow modernisation No accord on currencies On the road to Wembley

Train spotting

YOU don't need to stand at Clapham Junction with an anorak and binoculars to see through the Government's pretence that privatisation will introduce effective competitive forces throughout the railway.

As every trainspotter knows, Intercity 225s are a pretty rare sight on the lines running into south London. Nor will the newly-created rolling stock leasing companies, Roscos for short, find much of a market for commuter trains with the next operator of the East Coast main line.

Britain's railways were built piecemeal by regional railway companies. Each used different standards for the height and width of tunnels. British Rail compounded this mistake by electrifying parts of the system, some with a third rail, others with overhead gantries.

As a result, routes have different rolling stock specifications, and hence dedicated trains. Equipment purchase and maintenance costs have been inflated, operational difficulties compounded. No wonder Britain's railways need a £1.8 billion a year subsidy.

Privatisation should unleash market pressure for off-the-peg equipment that is cheaper to buy,

easier to operate and maintain and can be switched between different regions. Rolling stock costs are falling worldwide as cosy national suppliers are replaced by competing international groups offering better products. But standardisation would require Railtrack participation, and that could prove a sticking point, since Railtrack is being prepared as a cash cow for potential investors.

Yet the pre-privatisation Rosco contracts unveiled yesterday appear designed to maximise value for the Treasury, not promote modernisation.

Train operators will be obliged to use more than 68 per cent of existing rolling stock for the next decade. For most equipment, a monopoly supplier will be replaced by a duopoly. And cosy maintenance contracts will stymie the search for savings for up to four years. Hambros, who devised the new regime, claim Roscos will be encouraged to accelerate renewal of their train leasing fleets in order to reduce

tax liabilities.

But the real danger is the arbitrary nature of the lease valuations. If rolling stock charges have been fixed at the wrong level, manufacturers who offer new trains more cheaply will find franchised operators locked into over-priced contracts. That would slow modernisation and continue to disadvantage the railway industry in its competition against road travel.

Once again, merchant bankers are playing guessing games about complex, and artificial, new markets. The last time they tried that was in the privatisation of the electricity industry.

Nostalgia on the foreign exchanges
DOLLAR weakness has rattled the bars of the exchange rate mechanism so hard that those still stuck in the cage were bound to call for action. Jacques Santer, their spokesman, duly obliged over the weekend. The Plaza and



LOUVE ACCORDS, SEPTEMBER 1994

Louvre accords, sepia-hued icons of politicians fed up with speculators, were brought out of the museum, dusted down and held up as the model for 1995. There must be an international agreement to stop markets messing things up. Perhaps it should be signed in Euro Disneyland. The snowball of speculative money, which tends to cause avalanches whenever it changes direction, has grown far bigger than in the days of Louvre and Plaza. There is no more fundamental change of direction than when authorities hint that American interest rates have stopped going up and German

rates have stopped going down. Trading is exaggerated rather than irrational.

Whenever the snowball thunders into markets, the fragility of the ERM is exposed. Widening the rates helped, but other European currencies become even less competitive in third markets. The fare to EMU looks ever more expensive, most clearly for France, undermining the cause. More rationally, the message might be that there should be no attempt to fix currencies permanently until just before the single currency is created — and that should be as soon as possible.

Outside the ERM, these tough issues can be avoided. Kenneth Clarke, the man who has promised the European central bank to Consett, can dismiss as unrealistic any attempt to return to currency manipulation pacts. Airy superiority is much easier than co-operation or determination. This lack of respect will not have gone unnoticed on the other side of the Channel, where diplomats could happily assure

Tory backbenchers that there is no chance of sterling joining up for EMU while Mr Clarke is at the Treasury.

Sir Ron can blow Wembley whistle

WEMBLEY would seem to have been going through a financial reconstruction since, say, Southampton last had any chance of success on its hallowed turf. Battered shareholders can only hope the latest plan is not allowed to slip through the goal-keeper's fingers.

Three years ago, for example, shareholders put up at 30p a share, in what was promised to be positively the last rescue rights. Now the company needs one of those complex debt-for-equity packages that have become such a gold mine for the corporate financiers. The sticking point here is the presence of Sir Ron Brierley's Guinness Peat, a relative newcomer to the shareholder register, as owner of

25 per cent of the preference shares. Sir Ron, a skilled practitioner at the corporate black arts, has therefore taken a ring-side seat at a relatively low cost and is in a position to bring the game to an early end and block any proposals that do not please him.

Wembley has already accepted the relegation of Sir Brian Wolfson, its chairman and driving force, as an inevitable cost of the rescue. Sir Brian, possibly at Guinness Peat's instigation, is moving down to deputy chairmanship of the group he largely created and then over-expanded. Wembley's shares are now suspended at 6p because of the weekend leaks, which prompts thoughts of horses and stable doors, given the enormous amount of informed speculation the rescue has already attracted in newspaper columns.

Sir Ron is clearly arbitrating, looking to sweeten whatever terms are eventually granted to preference holders. Clear enough: but what is he doing upping his stake in another casualty, Starhope, owner of half of Broadgate and under 3p-a-share offer from British Land? Sir Ron is offering 3.5p — and the first person to work out just why could be in a position to back a winner.

Argos passes £100m to become top toy seller

By SUSAN GILCHRIST

SHARES in Argos jumped 19p to 376p after the catalogue retailer beat even the most optimistic City expectations with a 20 per cent rise in profits and announced it was seeking authority to buy back its shares.

David Donne, the chairman, said that the group had no immediate plans to purchase its own shares but was, nevertheless, seeking approval to do so at its next annual meeting in May. The Argos cash pile has been steadily growing in recent years and stood at £354 million at the end of 1994.

Mike Smith, chief executive, said the money was currently earmarked for acquisitions. The group has been investigating acquisition opportunities for some time but so far has failed to find any. Yesterday Mr Smith said it had identified a number of key targets

but has yet to enter into negotiations.

Profits broke through the £100 million level for the first time as the group reported a pre-tax result of £100.2 million in the year to December 31, up from £83.5 million in the corresponding period last year. Mr Donne said it was a significant milestone and vindicated the group's strategy of offering consistently low prices across a broad product range.

Total sales rose 13.3 per cent while like for like sales from existing stores increased 6.3 per cent. Mr Smith said that the group had seen positive growth in like for like sales and market share gains in all of its 12 product categories except for DIY.

The best performers were furniture, textiles, jewellery and toys, where the chain overtook Woolworths and



Smith: acquisitions planned

Toys "R" Us to become Britain's biggest toy retailer.

While Mr Smith believes Argos has the right breadth of product categories, he says there is potential to raise the number of lines from the current 7,448 to about 8,600 over the next two to three years.

The group maintained its aggressive pricing stance with

selling prices almost 1 per cent lower last year than in 1993. A total of 94 per cent of the ranges in the 1995 spring-summer catalogue have been included at the same or lower price than last year.

There were 31 new stores opened during the period, including ten superstores, bringing the chain to 347. Expansion is set to continue at a rate of 20 to 30 stores a year with scope for up to 600 outlets across the country.

Mr Donne predicted another difficult year ahead for retailers as economic and political uncertainties repress consumer confidence. However trading at Argos is encouraging with sales up 11.5 per cent in the first ten weeks. Like for like sales are 3.5 per cent ahead. The final dividend is lifted to 7.85p (5.65p) making a total of 10.5p (8.0p), due on May 17.

Tempus, page 24

Goodwill charges push Bunzl into red

By PHILIP PANGALOS

A HEFTY £84 million of exceptional goodwill charges pushed Bunzl into the red, but the paper, plastics and cigarette filters group is confident on prospects after a jump in underlying annual profits and a strong start to the current year.

Improved margins helped Bunzl to a better than expected 43 per cent advance in pre-tax profits to £79.8 million in the year to December 31, on turnover from continuing operations 20 per cent higher at £1.51 billion. However, Bunzl slid to a £4.9 million loss, after writing-off a total of £84.7 million, including £35 million of goodwill on last year's £61 million disposal of Bunzl Building Supplies to Rugby and a £49.7 million charge on a number of acquisitions made during the Eighties.

Anthony Habgood, chief executive, said profits advanced in all business areas and margins improved to 5.3 per cent (4.2 per cent). He said

the current year started well, with volume increases and margins holding up well.

Organic growth, acquisitions and firmer paper and plastic prices helped profits from paper and plastic disposables to jump 33 per cent to £54.1 million, as turnover topped £1 billion for the first time.

Higher paper prices, improved margins and restocking helped fine paper profits to surge 122 per cent, while profits from cigarette filters rose 27 per cent with growth in demand for special filters as more smokers moved towards higher-margin ultra low tar cigarettes.

Strong cash generation and disposals cut debts by £33.5 million to £66 million, with gearing down to 27.1 per cent (42.7 per cent). Adjusted earnings rose to 12p from 8.3p a share. The total dividend rises to 5p (4.1p), with a final of 3.2p, compared with 2.3p, payable on July 3.

Devro issue will fund US purchase

By SUSAN GILCHRIST

DEVRO International, the sausage skin maker, is making a \$290 million expansion move in the US through the acquisition of Teepak International. Devro is to pay \$135 million for Teepak, a leading manufacturer of casings to cover processed meats, and assume debts of up to \$155 million.

Graeme Alexander, Devro's chief executive, said the deal would broaden the group's product range. It would also increase its geographical coverage and provide a manufacturing base in Eastern Europe.

Teepak made profits before taxation and exceptional items of \$21.4 million on sales of \$327 million in the year to September 30. Profits were almost \$5 million lower than the previous year, due to operational difficulties at its new plant in Sandy Run, South Carolina. Devro said it was confident it could solve the problems and restore margins. Mr Alexander expects few

job losses among Teepak's 2,200 employees.

The purchase price will be paid via the issue of almost 11 million new ordinary Devro shares, up to \$52.8 million in new convertible preference shares and by a cash payment of up to \$45 million.

Mr Alexander said gearing would rise to about 80 per cent, although this figure climbs to 150 per cent if convertible preference shares are included as debt. He said the deal would be broadly neutral on earnings per share in the current year and earnings enhancing thereafter.

Devro reported a 14 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £29.1 million, from £25.6 million, in the year to December 31. Earnings per share rose to 16.4p from 14.8p. The final dividend is lifted to 4.7p (4.17p) making a total of 7.05p against a notional full-year dividend of 6.25p in 1993.

Tempus, page 24

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TRADE INDEMNITY

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares race past 3,100 to highest level of year

SHARE prices surged through the 3,100 level to close at their highest level so far this year as profits from the recent Wellcome bid began pouring back into the market-place via a £200 million program trade.

The FT-SE 100 index closed at its best of the day, with a leap of 34.9 points to 3,124.2, further supported by opening gains on the Wall Street.

Steepest rises in the index during the past week to more than 100 points.

Market-makers quickly went on the defensive as investors began bidding for stock in thin trading, with sterling showing signs of rallying. It had been assumed that much of the early demand had been generated by traders in the financial future looking to the cash market to cover some exposed positions.

It was not until towards the close that evidence of the program trade began to emerge. Market makers pointed the finger at BZW, claiming it had rolled up profits gleaned from Glaxo's bid for Wellcome on behalf of a number of institutional clients and had begun pouring money back into the system. At the same time, it had hedged its position in the financial future.

The rise in the index was made all the more impressive by the long list of leading companies going ex-dividend - equivalent of a ten-point fall. Genuine retail business remained on low, with bed-and-breakfast transactions to establish a tax loss before the new financial year starting to get into full swing. These are believed to have accounted for a large number of the 708 million shares traded.

Bass responded, with a rise of 5p to 521p, to news that it had settled a lawsuit in the US against the Promus Companies.

Early speculative attention was focused on Arjo Wiggins Appleton, 17p higher at 253p, as talk resurfaced that St Louis, its 40 per cent French owned shareholder, is selling its holding, paving the way for a full bid. St Louis later denied the claims, but it came too late to affect the share price. There could be a few burnt fingers this morning when trading resumes.

The financial sector enjoyed some useful gains. Legal & General maintained its recent momentum with a rise of 9p to 481p. Last week it revealed it was in talks with the Depart-



Tony Habgood, and David Williams, Bunzl finance director

ment of Trade and Industry about utilising orphan funds that could result in a bonus payout for shareholders. Prudential also climbed 11p to 332p before figures later today expected to show pre-tax profits marginally ahead of last year's £593 million.

Bank of Scotland stood out like a sore thumb in a rising banking sector with a loss of 3p to 411p as ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, reiterated its sell recommendation. Analyst Peter Toeman has also cut his forecast for the current year by £20 million to £640 million.

Shares of Royal Bank of Scotland stood out like a sore thumb in a rising banking sector with a loss of 3p to 411p as ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, reiterated its sell recommendation. Analyst Peter Toeman has also cut his forecast for the current year by £20 million to £640 million.

There were also gains for Bank of Scotland 3p to 214p, Barclays 10p to 608p, HSBC 17p to 716p, Lloyds 16p to 593p, National Westminster 9p to 518p, and TSB 5p to 246p.

Half-year figures from Lucas Industries lived up to expectations, with pre-tax profits more than doubled at £44.5 million and the promise of more of the same in the

second six months. The interim was unchanged at 2.1p. The shares responded with a fall of 1p to 197p.

Argos reacted to news of a large new expansion programme with a rise of 9p to 376p. The group plans to open 27 new stores over the next year, at a cost of £34 million. At least 21 of those will be ready by the end of this year. It

is also seeking permission from shareholders to buy back some of its shares. Argos is currently sitting on cash of more than £200 million.

An impressive set of full-year figures also boosted Bunzl, where Tony Habgood is chief executive. The shares went 2p firmer to 170p, as pre-tax profits soared 43 per cent to almost £80 million. It was described as an across-the-

board improvement, with profit margins up from 4.2 per cent to 5.3 per cent. The current year had started in a similar vein.

Storm Group, the cartoon and merchandising group, slipped 2p to 6p after denying reports that it was in bid talks. Storm said it has not received any approaches which would constitute an offer and was in talks with third parties which may lead to a substantial acquisition. In January Storm warned the City to expect an overall loss for the year because of production delays to a new television series.

Jupiter Tyndall, the fund manager, advanced 8p to 593p, excited by weekend claims that Commerzbank of Germany is ready to bid at least 400p a share, valuing the company at £160 million. Towards the end of last year there was talk that SG Warburg wanted to bid for the group, but the speculation evaporated when Warburg later announced it was merging with Morgan Stanley. Warburg, which continues to be viewed as a potential bid target, slipped 4p to 720p.

Shares of Wembley were suspended at 6p at the company's request. A statement said the leisure group was now close to finalising its reconstruction.

GILT-EDGED: Gilt opened lower as the market showed signs of running out of steam. However, buyers soon began nibbling, cheered by a steeper performance from the pound and evidence of a slowdown in bank lending. But trading conditions overall were still thin, squeezing prices higher.

The quieter tone was reflected in the futures pit, where the June long gilt added 1/16 to £103 1/16 with only 27,000 contracts were completed.

Among conventional issues Treasury 8 per cent climbed 1/16 to £96 1/16, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was five ticks better at £98 1/16. The Bank of England will later today reveal details of this month's auction. It is expected to raise around £2 billion with the issue of existing stock Treasury 8 per cent 2015.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were flat as wary investors took a breather after last week's strong run. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 1.04 points at 4,074.69.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 4074.69 (+1.04)
S&P Composite 495.46 (+0.09)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 16129.96 (+121.2)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 8594.42 (+59.72)

Amsterdam:
EOD Index 394.87 (+2.07)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 1904.5 (-16.7)

Frankfurt:
DAX 1991.75 (-13.49)

Singapore:
Straits 2001.54 (-10.29)

Brussels:
General 6937.35 (+4.27)

Paris:
CAC-40 1811.57 (+22.74)

Zurich:
SIX 595.10 (+1.68)

London:
FT 30 3281.8 (+19.4)
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TEMPUS

Lucas skywalker

LUCAS Industries is clearly still deeply embarrassed by being caught out by the US Defence Department after failing to carry out promised safety checks on defence equipment. The company has, it says, "settled the criminal aspects of the investigation", for which read been fined a total of £20 million. But the civil action is still grinding slowly through the litigation process after an initial settlement put up by the company was refused.

Hence Lucas's insistence that the consequent debarment from bidding for US defence contracts only affects £40 million of group business. The whole mess is a pity, because the interim figures find the group firing on all cylinders in spite of the continuing weakness of the aerospace market. George Simpson has implemented a strategic

review since his arrival as chief executive less than a year ago, and one option could be an exit from aerospace entirely, but the disadvantage of this would be to emphasise the cyclical nature of the automotive side. Selling the aerospace businesses at the bottom would not be a commercially astute move.

Margins in automotive will never see the peak 9 per cent enjoyed in 1989-90, but they rose from 3.3 per cent to 5.6 per cent in the first half and can expect to improve further this year on normal seasonal trends. Full-year figures, the first for a while to come in without heavy exceptions, would put the shares on a forward multiple of about 17, and with little prospect of higher dividends, there would seem to be little to go in the near term. Further out, prospects depend on the extent of future restructuring.

Devro

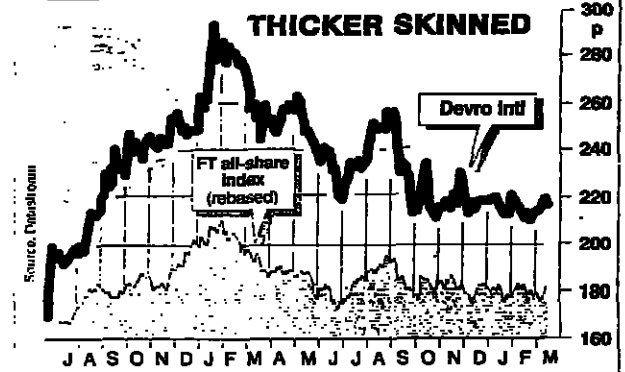
HAVING been one of the most fashionable new issues of 1993, Devro International fell out of favour last year as investors fretted about what the company was going to do with the cash that was piling up on its balance sheet. It has answered that question emphatically with an acquisition that is hard to fault from any angle, and one that will take several years to digest.

Teepak International expands all aspects of Devro's business. As well as trebling the group's turnover, it expands its product range into cellulose and fibrous sausage skins, which will fit well alongside Devro's collagen skins. It also adds to the group's geographic coverage, since 60 per cent of Teepak's sales are in America, compared with only a quarter at Devro.

Nor does the price look expensive. The \$135 million purchase price may represent an exit multiple of 15 times, but there is plenty of scope at Teepak to improve its 11 per cent operating margins, which should ensure the business is earnings enhancing by the end of the year.

The market may be con-

cerned about Devro's gearing after the deal, which will rise to 160 per cent after taking on Teepak's \$155 million debt. But Devro's cash generation is phenomenal, as it showed when it repaid all its £12 million flotation debt within five months. The shares, at 217p should be due for a run once the placing for the acquisition is completed.



Argos

AS the high street lapses into another bout of depression, Argos remains one of the rare pools of light. Its no-frills retailing formula is perfect for the thrifty nineties consumer, while its core technology helps to prevent the stock shortages or gluts that other retailers suffer.

It is easy to chart Argos's successful markets of the moment by judging the pain other retailers suffer. Last year, it stole a significant slice of market in jewellery and electronics, to the dismay of Signet and Kingfisher.

Argos continues to open stores relentlessly, with another 27 planned this year. While its target to increase the chain from 347 to almost 600 looks ambitious, the group has made only a handful of mistakes; just five of the 347 do not produce a profit on a full contribution basis.

In all other aspects of business development, Argos's management remains

deeply conservative. The group is looking at acquisitions and could spend more than £300 million. But any deal looks distant.

That is why the City was so excited about the possibility of a share buy-back, even though the group emphasises that none is currently planned. But the 31 per cent rise in the dividend shows that Argos is prepared to slow the growth of its cash pile, and even on a historic P/E ratio of 17, the shares do not look overpriced.

Charter

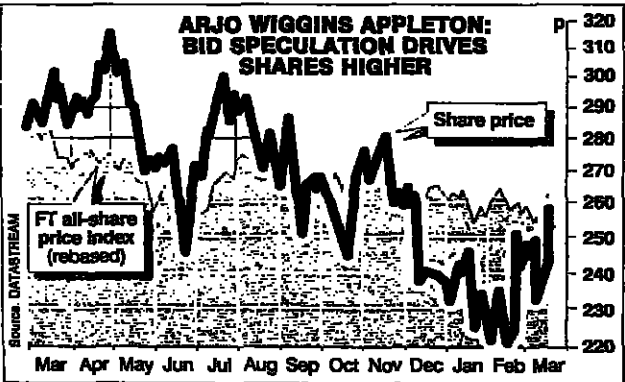
CHARTER's Swedish horse came in a good ten lengths ahead of the field, contributing almost 60 per cent of the group's profit from only four months' trading. Such a performance puts bigger demands on Esab, and the market expects operating profits of £110 million from Charter in 1995 with welding bringing in £80 million.

But the rating on the

shares suggests the market expects Esab's progress to slow markedly in 1996. Much of the last year's improvement came from better margins and a surge of growth in Brazil which produced a large chunk of Esab's earnings. Sales in Europe were weak and Esab needs to improve its 14 per cent share of the German market.

Questions over the quality of Esab's earnings and growth prospects are a little unfair. The company has more to do in squeezing more margin from Esab; the European automotive and construction cycle has further to go and Esab has yet to make the most of prospects in the Far East. In the meantime, the profitability of Esab will shorten its payback and reduce earnings. If Charter can generate £25-30 million from the sale of Hargreaves, gearing should fall to 30 per cent by December, leaving the company free to buy again.

EDITED BY NEIL BENNETT



Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

FT All-share price index (rebased)

Share price

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

FT All-share price index (rebased)

Share price

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

FT All-share price index (rebased)

Share price

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

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Share price

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FT All-share price index (rebased)

Share price

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

THE TIMES



HONG KONG DIARY

Barings staff had last fling

SHELLSHOCKED Barings Securities staff drank champagne and partied the night away hours before the firm collapsed, according to a source familiar with the company's financial district. They ran up huge bills in the Captain's Bar at the Mandarin Oriental in a last minute spending spree before the accountants moved in. Staff feared the worst after they were told that a "slight problem" had delayed payment of the annual bonus. They hit the popular watering hole for a Friday night blast on the firm's account. Administrators were appointed the same weekend.

Poachers alert

TALK of imminent defections by dealers and analysts continues to rumble through the expert community, despite covert attempts by UK regulators to keep Barings intact. The Bank of England is understood to have quietly urged local firms to keep their distance, amid speculation about the fate of 450 staff in the colony. Smith New Court in Tokyo has already poached a team of 11 analysts from Barings Securities (Japan). Attention has now focused on the highly regarded Barings Hong Kong research team. Local staff have pledged to stick together while the Bank prepares its report on the collapse. Top sales and research staff are in line for payments of more than HK\$2 million each (£160,000), but it is unclear whether the money will compensate for longer term uncertainty. Barings has already lost business to rival firms in Tokyo in the wake of the collapse.

Life boycott

CONCERN is growing over the impact of a reputed boycott by leading UK life offices, including Scottish Amicable and Edinburgh Fund Managers. They are said to have suspended dealings with Barings Securities — in a dispute over holdings in convertible and long-term loan paper.



Cassidy: 'confidence'

In defence

A VISITING City of London delegation has continued to play down the impact of the Barings collapse. Michael Cassidy, policy chairman at the Corporation of London, told local journalists that the City had proved its worth in tackling the crisis. He said: "A financial centre like London can withstand dense knocks along the way without confidence in the markets coming into question." Mr Cassidy said Hong Kong was likely to remain the major Asian financial centre outside Japan. The main threats were the expense of employing and housing staff, and uncertainty over 1997.

In credit

SEPARATELY, officials at Credit Lyonnais in Hong Kong say the troubled bank's Asian operations are almost certain to escape calls for up to 1,500 redundancies in the coming year. Europe is expected to bear the brunt of the cuts. Credit Lyonnais has about 3,000 employees in Asia, 500 of whom are in Hong Kong.

JON ASHWORTH

Top pay row simmers on as power chief faces grilling

Business hopes that the MPs' recess will cool off matters are likely to be dashed, says Philip Bassett

Cedric Brown, chief executive of British Gas, may have eased himself out of the spotlight over his 75 per cent salary rise, but the row over executive pay will be revived today when another privatised utility boss, Ed Wallis, chief executive of PowerGen, is publicly grilled about his pay and £1.2 million share options package.

Greville Janner, the Labour MP, is due to lead the Commons' all-party Employment Select Committee in questioning Mr Wallis and Sir Colin Southgate, the company's chairman, on their pay — but the row over top salaries is now so sensitive that Conservative MPs on the committee, irritated by the degree of political embarrassment the inquiry into the issue has caused, are set to challenge his chairmanship of it.

As part of their attack on pay, Labour yesterday put down a new clause for tomorrow's Commons report stage on the Government's Job Seekers' Bill, arguing for a new floor on wages aimed at preventing wages being driven down by those seeking to avoid unemployment.

Labour, too, is unlikely to miss the opportunities to keep up the pressure on Mr Brown during the committee stage of the Government's Bill, aimed at opening up the domestic gas market, which starts this morning.

At the same time, company directors' leaders will today try to counter public and government concern about top pay when the Institute of Directors sets out what standards and performance should be expected of directors to justify the rewards they receive.

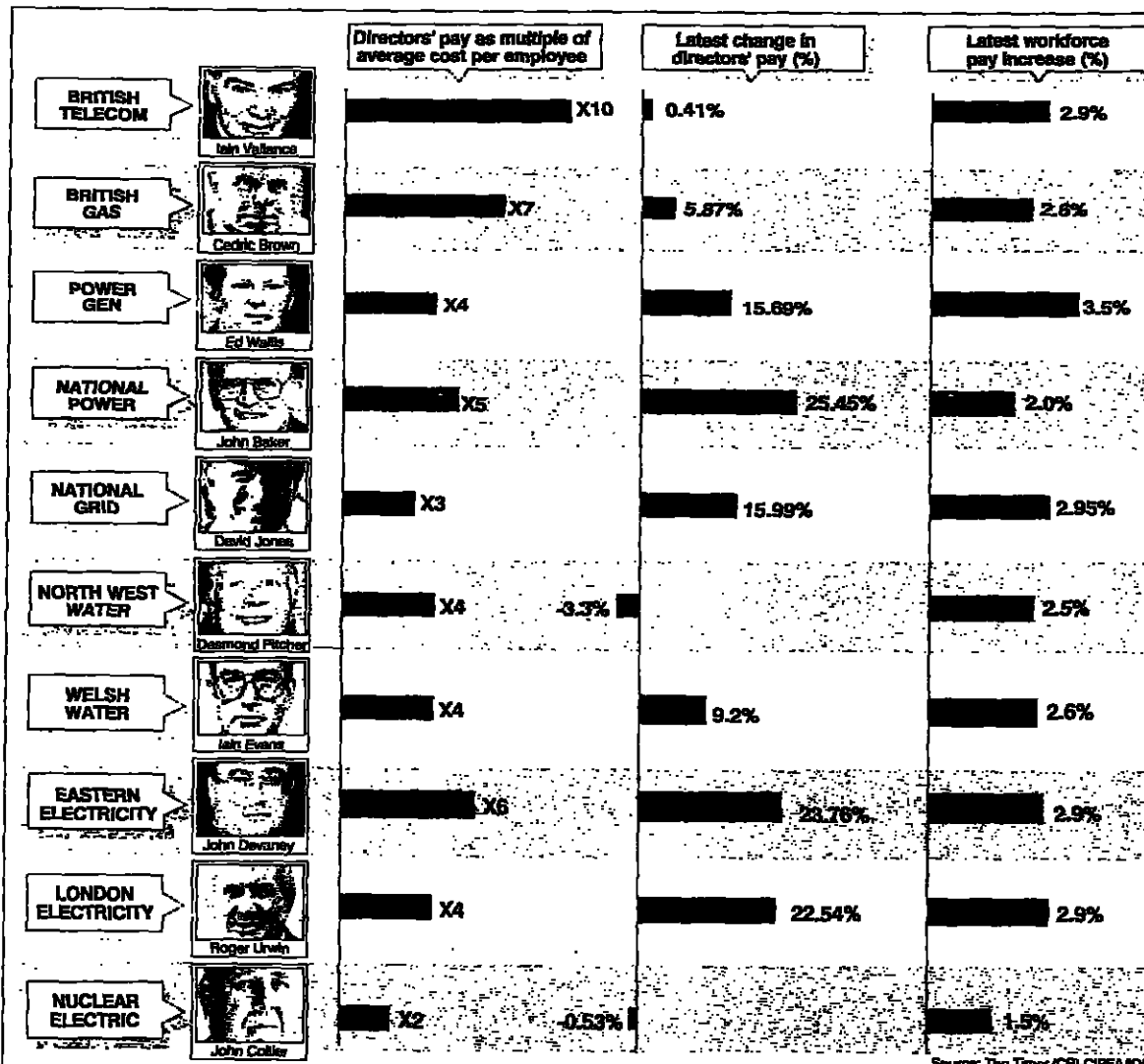
Although Mr Brown may at least for now be free from further scrutiny of his pay, all this suggests that the issue of the pay levels and increases for top company directors, especially in the privatised utility companies, is still stubbornly refusing to disappear.

Indeed, the letter from the office of Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, leaked last week by Labour, makes explicit the Government's view that the row will not go away. Cautioning instead that "there are potentially more causes célèbres to be found", it says that the utilities' next round of results, due in June and July, will generate a "good deal of publicity" as the latest salary rises for their executives are revealed.

Given the furore now surrounding the issue, today's appearance by Mr Wallis became inevitable when last month he defended his £400,000 salary and his share-option deal by declaring boldly: "I think I'm worth what I'm paid. Of course, I am." MPs are likely to want to test that statement today.

Inside the privatised utilities themselves, trade union officials report that the companies' workforces have already tested such views — and found them wanting.

Tony Young, joint general-secretary of the CWU, the grouping of communication workers that is the main union at BT, maintains that the public scrutiny of the £667,000 salary of Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, coupled with his supposedly jocular remark about preferring the more "relaxing" job of a junior NHS doctor to his own work, has badly damaged workforce



relations. He says: "BT employees resent the fact that since privatisation in 1984, their wages have risen by 80 per cent — while his have risen by 67 per cent. The chairman earns in a week what some of our members earn in a year."

Dave Sturaker, head of gas for Unison, the public services union, says: "Morale now in British Gas is at rock bottom." Taking account as well of the large-scale job losses stemming from BG's restructuring, he says, "people are concerned about their futures". He adds: "The better-qualified people are getting up and leaving — and that's a bleak future for British Gas."

Donald Macgregor, utilities national secretary for GMB, the general union, who will hold pay talks with the National Power and PowerGen members later this week, says of the row over executive pay rises in the electricity companies, as well as BG, that their managements know it will have an impact. "I think they realise that it will have to be reflected in the negotiations."

In most cases recently, the rises in utility directors' pay has certainly not been reflected in the pay negotiations for the companies' workforces.

Drawing on information provided for The Times on directors' pay by the Centre for the Study of Regulated Industries, a specialist arm of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, and on workforce pay by Incomes Data Services, the independent pay research company, the accompanying illustration shows that, in most cases, the increase in directors' average salary costs in key utility examples has far outstripped the most recent workforce rise.

Directors' pay at North West Water, for instance — whose £25,000 chairman, Sir Desmond Pither, told MPs on the Employment Committee last month that in his view utility execu-

tives' pay was "not a matter for general public debate" — actually fell by 3.3 per cent although under the latest employees' deal, workforce wages went up by 2.5 per cent.

Pay for directors in still state-owned Nuclear Electric also fell marginally, while workforce pay rose by 1.5 per cent in line with the Government's public-sector pay policy. But in most cases, the reverse was starkly true. For instance, between 1992-93 and 1993-94, total pay for the 15 directors of National Power rose by more than 25 per cent — but the latest increase for the company's 5,100 workers was just 2 per cent.

Such rises, too, are from an already high base. The Times calculations, based on CRI-CIPFA figures, show that average directors' pay costs in key utilities are many times average staff costs.

At Nuclear Electric, where specialised skills push up overall staff costs, the ratio is only 2:1. In the privatised companies, the figures are much higher — and the longer they have been in the private sector, the bigger the pay gap.

At PowerGen, which was privatised in 1991, for instance, with average directors' salary costs at £130,461 and average staff costs at £30,531, it is 4:1. In Mr Brown's British Gas, privatised in 1986, it is now 7:1 — £155,461 to £23,312. In Sir Iain's BT, privatised in 1984, it is now 10:1 — £244,466 to £24,454.

Leaders of the IoD will emphasise today that it is the performance of company directors that justifies their pay levels. Still supporting "world-class" companies, in spite of the Prime Minister dubbing some utility pay rises "distasteful", Mr Heseltine emphasises, too, the value for money for customers. He calculates that the total cost to each British Gas customer of the company's directors is 50p a

year, based on the cost being less than 0.1 per cent of turnover. Calculations by The Times show similar results for other utilities. BT's directors' costs, for instance, are 0.03 per cent of turnover. PowerGen's and National Power's 0.06 per cent, and North West and Welsh Water's 0.13 and 0.15 per cent respectively.

Critics of the utility bosses' pay increases regard such arguments as pointless, and even many business leaders privately acknowledge that the damage done to the utilities and to industry more broadly by the continuing row over executive pay probably cannot be remedied by such attempts at rebuttal.

Bigger moves may be necessary. Alasdair Simpson, senior employment law partner at Manches, the City-oriented solicitor, says that because of the "badly managed but inevitable one-off adjustments" to utility executives' salaries, the "campaign which will revolutionise the structure of executive remuneration packages now has unstoppable momentum".

One utility insider even suggests that the only way to deflect the row might be for a number of the companies' chief executives to forgo a pay rise this year — although such a move has not prevented criticism of Sir Iain, who has not had a BT pay rise since 1993.

Unstoppable momentum is probably right, as Mr Wallis is likely to find today during his turn in the hot seat of room 16 on the Commons committee corridor.

Business hopes that the Easter recess will cool off matters are likely to prove in vain, with attention then certain to switch fully to the CBI's committee on executive pay chaired by Sir Richard Greenbury, the £691,000 Marks & Spencer boss. Mr Heseltine's privatised utility "cause célèbre" are likely to find themselves uncomfortably celebrated for some time yet.

Clouds cast shadow over rail bazaar

Ross Tieman keeps track of the dismemberment of British Rail

Britain's great railway bazaar is wide open for business. Bids are in to build the £2.7 billion Channel Tunnel rail link, the first eight franchises are under the hammer, proposals for a £1 billion upgrade of the West Coast Main Line are being solicited and about 20 support operations, from maintenance to Red Star parcels, will be sold off by the end of next month.

The new voice amid the hawkers' chorus yesterday was that of Roger Mountford, a director of Hambros Bank. His offering: three rolling-stock leasing companies, estimated value £1 billion to £1.5 billion.

Putting any kind of value on assets in this bazaar is tricky. No ready market exists in second-hand railways. Moreover, the dismemberment of British Rail into 60 inter-dependent companies makes it impossible to assess the attractions of any business on the basis of its past record. If ever there were a pig-in-a-poke sale, it is this one. Neither the

own 3,755 rail coaches, locomotives and power units. Its portfolio of electric and diesel train sets will generate rental income of £290 million in the year to end-March 1995, falling to about £250 million at the end of eight years, and levelling off at about £150 million for the final two years.

The lease income streams reflect the Government's plan to let the first train-operating franchises, covering 51 per cent of services for seven years from April 1996. The 10-year contracts cover franchises operating the remaining 49 per cent of services. This appears to suggest the Government does not now believe franchising of all the train-operating routes can be completed until April 1998.

Porterbrook, the second largest Rosco, also has a mixed fleet of diesel and electric trains totalling 3,443 units. These are expected to generate income of £264 million this year, falling gradually in a similar pattern to that of Angel. The

third company, Eversholt, has an all-electric fleet generating initial incomes of £243 million a year. Trains are reckoned to have a 30-year life-span. The average age of the portfolios is about 17 years. Because the Government has concentrated recent railway investment on rolling stock, where voters can see it, a good proportion of the assets is under eight years old. But an excessive number of coaches are more than 30-years-old.

About 68 per cent of the companies' rolling stock has been leased for eight to ten years. The revenue stream is therefore well protected. Maintenance contracts, which account for a large proportion of ongoing costs, last for four or less.

Hambros has put a considerable effort into selling these assets. Already, 373 companies considered possible buyers have been approached, including 98 in the UK, 112 in North America and 42 in Japan. These include train-makers, leasing groups, and bankers.

But the regulatory, political and financial clouds that overshadow this dingy bazaar will make it difficult to realise a decent price.

If ever there were a pig-in-a-poke sale, it is this one

BUSINESS LETTERS

Lloyds advised me to go Girobank

From Mr Leslie James

Sir, I was interested to read about Graham Mason's problems with Lloyds Bank and cash deposits. (Business News, March 14) as I had a similar problem a few years ago.

I was invited into the manager's office to discuss my bank charges and after the preliminary rapport about the state of my business he then went on to explain how the cash I was paying in to the Bank was very expensive to handle and how my charges would need to be increased to cover the handling charges. I was given the standard check, store, transport and security costs explanation.

I was then astounded to hear my bank manager advise me to bank all my cash with Girobank. I have since taken his advice and now bank all my cash into a Girobank account which is much cheaper

Information rule

From Mr A. L. Cole

Sir, I had cause to write to the chairman of a plc recently and he has replied as follows:

"I am afraid that under the present regime the Stock Exchange expects a considerable amount of information and does not always seem concerned that the same information should be made available directly to the shareholders."

How true! I would also be interested to know why the Stock Exchange does not consider briefings plus give to investment houses, stockbrokers, merchant banks etc do not fall within the mischief of that section of the law which deals with "insider information".

Yours faithfully, A. L. COLE, The Well House, Orchard Close, Shiplake, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

Accountants 'can damage your wealth'

From the National Office, The Bankruptcy Association of Great Britain and Ireland

Sir, Your article today (March 15) under the heading "Blacklist" quotes new guidance for members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants as saying: "One of the best ways to avoid clients or potential clients becoming a problem is not to take them on in the first place."

Considering the number of people approaching us for advice on bankruptcy because of poor, if not downright

incorrect, advice given to them by members of that body, may I suggest those going into business should be issued with a different warning along the lines of: "Beware of accountants — they can damage your wealth!"

Yours faithfully, Gill Hankey, National Office, The Bankruptcy Association of Great Britain and Ireland, 17 Willingham Way, Kirkcaldy, Hull, North Humberside.

Deadline nears for NatWest essay competition

AS THE deadline for the NatWest/The Times Business Ethics Essay Competition draws near, the question of ethics in business seems to be never very far from the headlines.

Executive pay, pollution, the regulation of electricity prices and compensation for the mis-selling of pension transfers are as important as the evidence to the recent hearings of the Nolan Committee into ethical standards in public life.

The Times has joined NatWest Group in establishing an essay competition to give students a forum to discuss whether ethical standards are today lower than in previous generations and what the role of commerce should be.

The competition is open to all undergraduates and has a first prize of £3,000, and runners up prizes of £2,000 and £1,000.

All three prizes will be matched with awards to the universities that the winning students attend of £3,000, £2,000 and £1,000.

Students have until March 31 to write and submit an essay of 1,200 words on the subject: "Can a competitive business be ethical?"

Details are available from NatWest university branches or by telephoning the bank on its freefone number 0800 200 400.

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Source: Fitch



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TV REVIEW

Heart-throbs of the CPS

Ker Pyna

● The author is Secretary of the Law Society's Criminal Law Committee.

NEIL ADDISON

● Crown Prosecutor, *BBC1*, Thursday, 8-30pm (Scotland, Friday, 10-30pm).

Mr Birt has asked Peter

□ LORD MACKAY of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, has set up a working group of officials to see whether legislation should be brought in to clarify the legal status of "living wills". These

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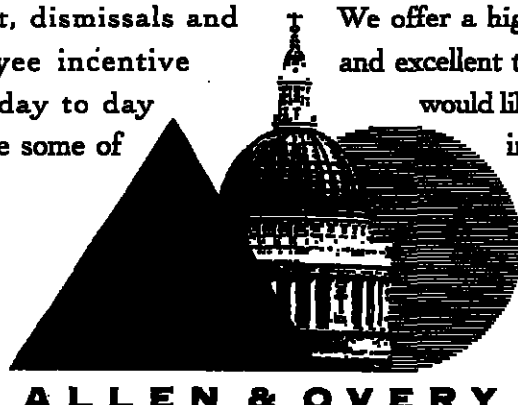
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Bristol office of medium sized firm require experienced legal executive or 2-3 year qualified solicitor to cover maternity leave over 10 month period. Applicants should have experience of industrial disease cases, RTA and some medical negligence. Ref: 20210

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CCT CONTRACTS

District council based in home counties seeks solicitor with minimum 5 years' ppe for 2 year fixed-term contract. Applicants must have previous experience of CCT. Ref: 20138

CONSTRUCTION LITIGATION

Commercial firm, London based, seeks 1-2 year qualified solicitor to assist with heavy workload. Contract to start immediately for extended period. Ref: 19998

PLAINTIFF PERSONAL INJURY

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For further information about these and other vacancies please call Nicky Rutherford-Jones or Emma Hopkins on 0171 405 6062 (0171 350 0682 evenings/weekends) or write to us at Special Project Lawyer, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4HL. Confidential fax: 0171 831 6394.

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TAKING STOCK.....

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For further information in complete confidence, please contact Greg Abrahams or June Maatle (both qualified lawyers) on 0171-405 6062 (0171-266 5001 evenings/weekends) or write to them at Quarry Dougal Recruitment, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JH. Confidential fax: 0171-831 6394.



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Interested candidates should contact Peter Thompson, Solicitor, on 0171 831 2000 or write to him at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LH. (Fax: 0171 831 6662). This appointment is now being handled by Michael Page Legal and all CVs sent direct will be forwarded to them.



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This assignment is being handled exclusively by Michael Page Legal. Interested candidates should forward their curriculum vitae (including contact number and details of current salary and benefits package) to Susanne Vahl, Solicitor at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LH, fax 0171 831 6662, or telephone her on 0171 831 2000.



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POP page 34
Kris Kristofferson begins
a British and Irish
tour in low-key but
inspirational form

ARTS

CLASSICAL page 35
Sir Georg Solti explains
why he is turning
impresario to help
top young musicians



Observed at the scene of a crime

VISUAL ART: At the ICA, Richard Cork enters the nightmarish and disturbing worlds of Abigail Lane and Luc Tuymans

More and more young artists are becoming preoccupied with a sense of damage. Whether mental or physical, individual or social, self-inflicted or perpetrated by an aggressor, injury is a growing obsession. But how can this concern be conveyed? The question is raised in an acute form by *Skin of the Teeth*, Abigail Lane's perturbing installation at the ICA.

Visitors are not immediately alerted to the trouble in store. A small stone dog stands expectant on the otherwise empty floor. On the opposite wall, a large and imposing red abstract reinforces the aura of resplendent grandeur. Then the mood shifts. For the spotless serenity of this initial room is unsettled by the wallpaper. Lane designed it, but far from extending the sense of splendour, the marks on this paper resemble hand-prints and splashes of blood.

Nothing, however, is straightforward. Lane may tempt us to conclude that the wallpaper marks were made by pressing her hands in the giant inkpad, like a criminal suspect recording fingerprints. But a photograph in Lane's catalogue discloses a far more gruesome starting-point. A murder scene in a New York building is reproduced. Before death came, the victim left a cluster of despairing hand-prints on the wall above, and they dribbled forlornly downwards. These are the marks transposed by Lane, who thereby turns the most distressing evidence imaginable into a form of decor.

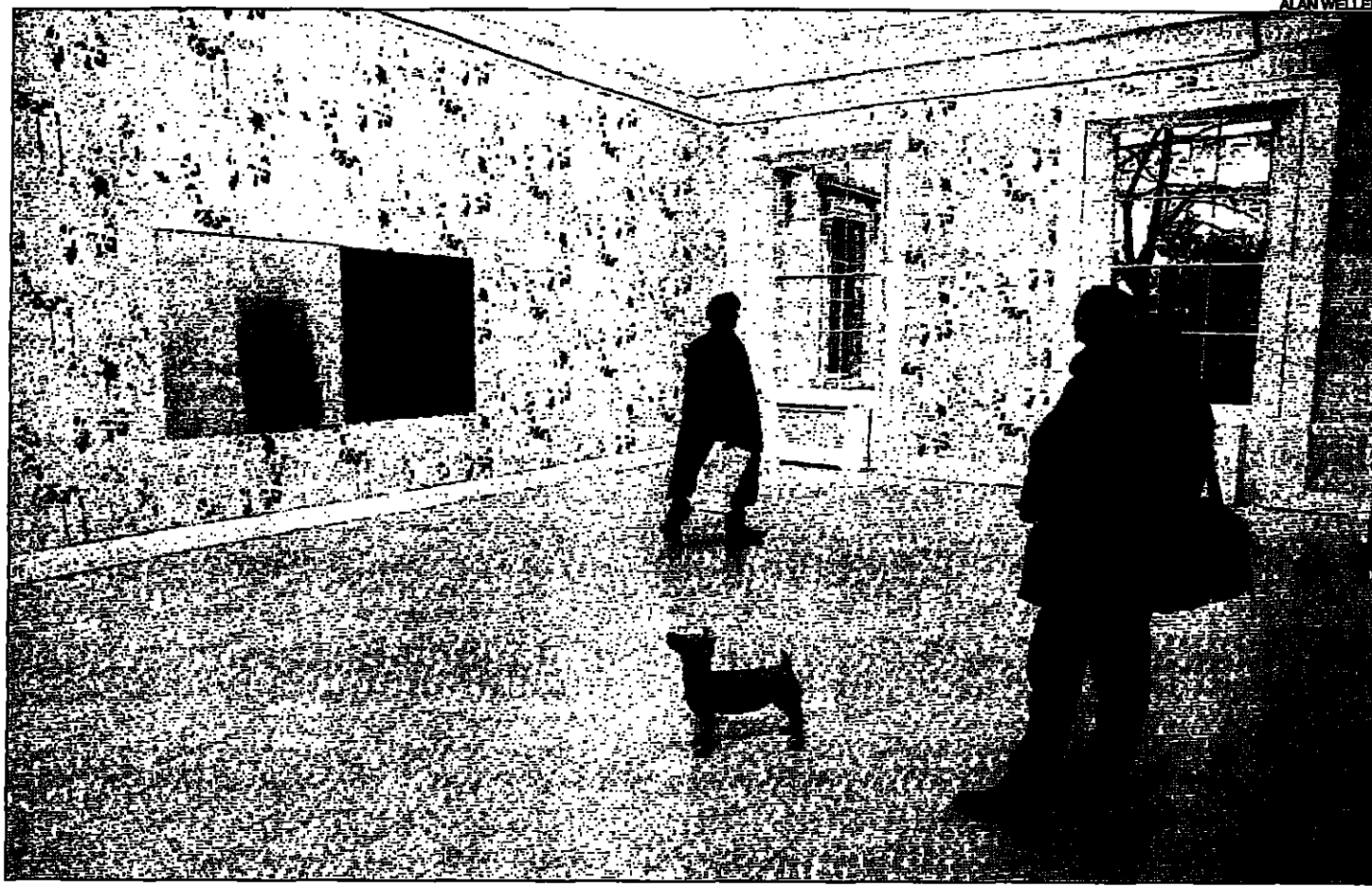
Thus, Lane dramatises the gulf between the horror of raw police evidence and the sanitised refinement of art. No wonder the dog looks stranded. Like us, he has been thrown off the scent.

The same wallpaper is deployed in the next room. This time, however, wax fragments of a figure hang from the ceiling. They become the macabre equivalent of the chandeliers which might once have graced Nash's original interior. An upside-down male head is suspended, with eyes closed and mouth open in a frozen cry. He recalls the grimacing bronzes of the 18th-century sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, many of whose "character heads" resemble catatonic patients in an asylum. But the comparison shows how undisturbing Lane's head really is.

In such an enigmatic context, even the surveillance cameras take on a new significance. Although a routine part of the gallery's security equipment, they become now as suspect as the ICA's safety notice by the windows bearing the terse instruction "In Emergency Pull."

Only on the way out, though, do we experience genuine disquiet. In the far corner of the room, a curious scraping can be heard behind a door. It is shut fast, forcing us to stand there feeling voyeuristic as we eavesdrop. The noises are muffled, and they have the same teasing quality as the rest of this maddeningly ironic show. But they also have the capacity to alarm. Although out of sight, they convey a desperation more persuasive than anything on view.

Is Lane implying that, in our violence-sated age, the artist can only startle by mounting an almost stealthy invasion? This, at least, seems to be the underlying belief in Luc Tuymans's show downstairs at the ICA. Wallpaper turns up here as well, providing the source for a painting based on a childlike image of geese. One of the birds opens its beak, and its visible eye expands



A stone dog initially imparts a deceptive calm to Abigail Lane's *Skin of the Teeth*. But the wallpaper evokes a gruesome murder

into a black void. The more we look at this apparently innocent painting, the less playful it becomes.

Its effect typifies Tuymans's approach. For the work produced by this young Belgian painter is slow-burning. Tuymans relies on the power of memory. In the geese canvas, he recalls a nursery wallpaper that frightened him as a child. Most of his art, though, concentrates on fears which arrive only with adulthood.

A woman's breast hangs down in one picture, filling the modest

dimensions of the canvas with doughy flesh. Tuymans's habit of cropping an image, so that it is barely identifiable, gives the breast a near-abstract strangeness. But after a while, it looks intensely vulnerable — like the figure in another impressive painting who seems overshadowed or penetrated by a dark, predatory creature.

Tuymans's handling of paint spurns virtuosity. He would rather appear perfunctory than facile, and often ensures that the pigment begins to crack soon after it dries.

Conservators must have nightmares, but the damage chimes with the meanings he conveys.

Take the little picture simply called *Body*, the most memorable image on display. Sliced off at the neck and crotch, it is an anonymous and possibly violated figure. Two thin black lines halfway down the torso could represent cuts, but nothing is certain. All we know is that the figure seems fragile, and the cracks running across the picture add to the feeling that disintegration is imminent.

Sometimes Tuymans's understated manner looks merely off-hand. One picture is based on a gas chamber from a concentration camp, but without that knowledge the viewer could see it as a dull, scrappily painted interior drained of visual interest. All the same, Tuymans's best pictures ambush us with the surprise of discovering suppressed fear and aggression lurking within the apparent banality of everyday life.

● Abigail Lane, ICA (0171-930 0493) to April 23; Luc Tuymans to April 30

AROUND THE GALLERIES

BORN in Pennsylvania and trained in Philadelphia, Anne Estelle Rice arrived in Paris in 1905. She certainly repays rediscovery. The earliest works here show a dazzling Fauve palette allied to incisive draughtsmanship. There are resplendent harbour scenes, a vivid self-portrait, and a sun-drenched beach scene which recalls early Dufy.

Emscote Lawn Gallery, 21 Emscote Road, Warwick (01926 491961), to March 31

□ A brilliant draughtsman, painter and etcher specialising in exotic subjects, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa, Erich Wolfstiel was a leading art teacher in Germany until he was hounded out by the Nazis (for being Jewish) in 1939. He came to Britain, only to be interned at the outbreak of war. He died in 1966. The present extensive show proves that work which has so triumphantly survived both persecution and unfashionability can survive anything.

Belgrave Gallery, 53 Englands Lane, NW3 (0171-722 5150) until Saturday

□ Sally Hunter's current show centres on a collection of more than 60 watercolours, drawings and gouaches by Vivien John, daughter of Augustus, who died last year at the age of 79. Her work is fluent, skilful and decorative. But surrounded by even the lesser works of Augustus and Gwen John, Matthew Smith, Roger Fry and others she knew well, she does rather recede.

Sally Hunter Fine Art, 11 Halkin Arcade, Motcomb Street, SW1 (0171-235 0934) until Friday

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MUSIC: Young talent finds a veteran champion; Germans in Birmingham; a Poulenc farce revived; Ligeti celebrated

A helping hand from the maestro

Sir Georg Solti has turned impresario to advance the careers of young soloists. He talks to Richard Morrison

To see Solti's name on a London concert poster is hardly a surprise. For the past 40 years the great conductor, now 82, has never been far from the centre of British musical life. But there is something different about the wording of this poster. "Sir Georg Solti presents Patricia Pagny and Lora Dimitrova," says the advertising for the Wigmore Hall on April 28. Sir Georg Solti presents? What is this — a new competitor for Victor

Hochhauser or Raymond Gubbay? Well, in a way. But only for one day a year. The conductor has decided to hire the Wigmore Hall each spring and underwrite the costs of a recital by young musicians that he can recommend wholeheartedly. And recommend them he will, from the Wigmore platform before they start to play. What's more, he is expecting the hall to be bursting with agents, impresarios, orchestral managers and record-company bigwigs. Solti is particularly emphatic about that. If I were them, I would make sure I was there.

The idea is so useful that it should perhaps be widely adopted. If every eminent and well-off musician put aside a few thousand pounds each year (tax-deductible, presumably) to promote deserving younger artists, the stagnant music profession would be transformed. But how did Solti dream up the scheme?

"I listened to the French girl, Pagny, because I had promised a friend that I would. It was in Paris: I was tired; the last thing I wanted to do was hear another pianist. But when she started playing, I suddenly sat up. Ah, this is good! About six months later I had a cancellation in Chicago, and I gave her a chance. That was very successful.

"As for the Bulgarian, Dimitrova, that is a stranger meeting. She came to my house to accompany a singer who was auditioning for me. The singer wasn't anything very much, so I began listening to how well the pianist was playing. I said to her: could you stay and play me



Sir Georg Solti, guiding the fortunes of prodigies. "I started at the worst possible time. By the time the war ended I was the oldest beginner in the history of music"

something?" She was very good. But she was married to an Englishman and expecting a baby, so I didn't hear any more from her, and forgot about her. Many months later, however, she called me and asked to play for me again."

So Solti devised a Wigmore recital that would introduce both pianists to London. "And I will do it once a year from now on. Next year's programme I have already agreed: I am going to put on three Russian sisters, the Bekovas. It is a funny story how I met them. I was learning Shostakovich's 13th Symphony — *Babi Yar*, with Yevushenko's poem — and I needed help, so I turned to a Russian teacher at the London School of Economics. He was very good, both

with the language and with the history of the work.

"Well, I wrote to ask how much I owed him, and he said 'nothing, just listen to these three girls who came out of Russia as refugees: they are a piano trio.' I said 'my God, who the hell wants a piano trio these days?' A very unhappy combination! But after I heard them I realised that they deserved a chance."

Certain London orchestral players who have been on the wrong end of the Solti scowl — or worse still, the Solti howl — may find it difficult to list kindness as a prominent trait of the veteran maestro's personality. But this is not the first time that Solti has helped the young. Several years

ago, when he went back to Hungary for the first time since his exile, he took several brilliant young Hungarians under his wing and gave them concerts in London.

Then, last year, he led the remarkable Solti Orchestral Project at Carnegie Hall in New York. Eighty young instrumentalists, just starting out in the profession, were given a fortnight of orchestral playing with 15 of the top principals from the big five American orchestras.

"I had them together two weeks," says Solti. "First I auditioned 220 young players in three days: it was my world record. I had to hear them myself: if you leave it to

professors they only push their own pupils. Then every morning we had a full rehearsal, every afternoon a group rehearsal. I went from group to group like a hospital doctor. The results were amazing. We will do it again, but not next year. It cost too much money. We paid the young people only travel, hotel and \$40 a day living expenses; even so, it came to a million dollars, all donated by private sources."

The idea was to nurture the next generation of top American players. Could such a project happen in Britain too? "Of course, the talent is here," Solti says. "But the money is much tighter. I'm not saying it is not possible. Who knows... maybe the lottery."

Why does a musician of Solti's eminence expend so much energy on nurturing the young? Perhaps, he suggests, because the memory of his own early struggles is still strong. "I started at the worst possible time. In Budapest in the 1920s we had horrendous inflation. My mother bought bread and milk every morning because by evening the same money was worthless. We had Fascism, we had Communism."

"Then came Hitler. I was 21 when he took power in Germany. By the time that evil was over, I was 34 and had hardly conducted a note. I was the oldest beginner in the history of music. And yet I do believe that I have a guardian angel — otherwise I wouldn't be here."

Serious business

CONCERT

Cologne RSO/Vonk
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

THE Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra is not here, we may be sure, for the stronger currency. It is not here to parade its virtuosity either: under its principal conductor Hans Vonk it gives the impression that it would be embarrassingly frivolous to do any such thing. It came to Symphony Hall, Birmingham, to play Bruckner, a mission clearly so serious that even Beethoven and Bernd Alois Zimmermann seem in retrospect to have been little more than preliminaries.

In fact, Zimmermann's *Concerto for String Orchestra* is not one of his most awe-inspiring works. Written in 1948, not long after his student days in Cologne, it is an accomplished exercise in neo-baroque with a little Bartók, more Stravinsky and nothing of the individuality Zimmermann was to develop before his unhappy death 25 years ago. In the unlikely event that anyone in the audience was alienated by that score, Lars Vogt was there to put things immediately right in a finely coloured, precisely and clearly articulated (and almost as stylishly accompanied) performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 2 in B flat.

It was evident by now that one of the major assets of the Cologne RSO is its well-tuned and neatly blended woodwind. The quality of the strings was less certain. Though the cellos and above all the violas distinguished themselves in the Bruckner, the comparatively ill-focused violin sound remained unattractive. But the brass is equally important in the Fourth Symphony and on the whole the horn section fulfilled its lyrical responsibility with as much grace as romantic splendour. The rigid structural economy which so many of his colleagues exercise in Bruckner symphonies was missing in Vonk's interpretation, and the finale was not overwhelming. But his sensitivity to the emotional inspiration of the harmonies and the significance of the modulations made the development of the first movement and much of the Andante a particularly poetic and personal experience.

GERALD LARNER

FESTIVALS: Forties comedy on the South Bank; Ligeti at the Royal Academy

There is nothing incongruous about Poulenc's one-act surrealist farce featuring in a series as earnest and admirable as Sir Simon Rattle's "Towards the Millennium". The cross-dressing jokes and male child-bearing are only one side of a piece suffused with joy, warmth, optimism and — if I may briefly reclaim the word — gaiety. Both on those counts and for its injunction to the audience to "go and make babies", it was as much needed in 1944, when Poulenc composed it, as was Apollinaire's play in 1917. As unimaginable horror recedes, a new era must dawn. *Mamelles* is absolutely of its time.

Sadly, Friday's concert performance was not in every respect worthy of it. Putting the soloists behind the London Sinfonietta seemed utterly dotty: they had to work hard to establish contact with the audience. The surtitles — a first

Farce with a flat edge

OPERA

Les Mamelles de
Tirésias
Queen Elizabeth Hall

for the QUEH? — were bluntly naïf. "Bigger off" somehow doesn't have the witty insouciance of "Mange tes pieds à la Sainte-Menehould", and "fish and chips" for "brandade et aïoli" really said it all.

Worse, one or two members of the cast made the fatal error of letting on that they were in a comedy: once you have Philip

Langridge (the Husband) being cute in a cloche hat and Nigel Robson smirking knowingly as his blackmailing offspring, the whole delicious farce is in danger of falling as flat as *Thérèse's* *poitrine*. Thank heavens for Simon Keenlyside, po-faced as the Theatre Director and the Gondarrie, and for Barbara Bonney's cool *Thérèse*. Rattle plainly loves the piece to bits, but there is such a thing as too much kindness. Arty phrasing, highlighting individual woodwind lines, inserting tiny pauses to point a particularly luscious passage are not what this score needs: just as on stage, it's wiser to

stand back, play it straight, and then it's funny. More astringent overall sound would have been welcome. too: at times it sounded more like César Franck than Poulenc. Modified rapture indeed. There was music-making of an altogether higher order in the first half. Boulez's *Le Soleil des eaux* stems from incidental music for a René Char play in 1948 when the composer was 23; he revised it extensively in 1965. It takes the form of two songs for soprano, one with chorus, both highly complex but with a transparency of orchestral timbre and flashes of wit that could only be French. Lucy Shelton sang with astonishing sensitivity, and playing and choral singing were beyond reproach. As the piece lasts only ten minutes, we were given an immediate repeat. I could easily have done with a third go.

RODNEY MILNES

Ligeti's elusive poetry in motion

NEW MUSIC

"LIGETI through the Looking Glass" was the tenth of the Royal Academy of Music's International Composer Festivals, which have established themselves as an important fixture in the contemporary music scene. These week-long events have offered, in the past four years, retrospectives of the work of Henze, Berio, Carter and Schmittke, all of whom have presented the student performers with formidable challenges. Yet with the possible exception of Berio, none is quite as elusive as Ligeti, whose often short pieces force a reassessment of conventional modes of discourse, and hence of listening. The festival included representative works from each side of the divide in Ligeti's career: the emigration from Hungary to the West in 1956. The two concerts I heard, however — by the Manson Ensemble under Elgar Howarth on Friday — concentrated on works from the latter, undeniably more significant period. Both concerts, clearly the product of intensive, concentrated preparation by the students, evinced an impressively high level of accomplishment. Certainly there was no recur-



Ligeti: obsessed with movement and its lack

purely mechanical one — is exemplified in the intervening "Movimento preciso e meccanico", an idea taken to its extreme in the *Poème symphonique* (1962) for 100 performing metronomes. The latter is at once an ironic reaction to Cage-type happenings of the Sixties, and a fruitful exploration of the shifts of perspective arising from the superimposition of varying metres.

In *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures*, a pair of music theatre pieces from 1962-65, the preoccupation is not with metre so much as timbre. Three vocalists converse, or dispute, in nonsense vowels that nevertheless convey rapidly shifting emotional states: alluring sensuality becomes vociferous indignation in a micro-second. Without a staging or props of any kind, the singers had to work harder than ever to make their intentions obvious, but Lesley-Jane Rogers, Jane Webster and Robert Rice were a brilliantly resourceful trio.

The Friday concert offered another piece with theatrical connections: *Macabre Collage*, an orchestral suite drawn from Ligeti's opera *Le Grand Macabre* by the composer and Elgar Howarth, who conducted. Sirens, car horns and deafening noises are features of this anarchic score, and the players entered into its spirit with abandon. The festival is also an opportunity for student composers to have their works performed. Of the two scores I heard, Paul Newland's savage, ritualised *Peripeia*, a *Rite of Spring* for our times, was easily the more impressive, and indeed it won the prize for the week's best composition.

BARRY MILLINGTON

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ENTER today's Don't Forget Your Passport competition and you could visit Amsterdam, Holland's exciting city of diamonds, canals and fine art. Each day for three weeks, *The Times* is offering the prize of a holiday. Phone in your answer by 3pm and you will be contacted later if you are the winner and asked whether you want to take your break today — though you will have the option of going at a later date if you wish.

Amsterdam became wealthy during the 17th Century when huge profits poured in from trade with the East Indies. Opulent gabled houses were built by merchants along the city's canals and wealthy patrons commissioned artists including Rembrandt and Vermeer.

Our winner and a partner will be able to view many of these painters' works in the city's galleries and museums, including the Rijksmuseum which has a huge collection of Dutch art from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

Other sights in Amsterdam include the house where Anne Frank hid for several years during the second world

before she was betrayed to the Germans, and Dam Square. You can visit diamond workshops where you can buy jewellery, or just stroll beside the tree-lined canals and watch the brightly painted barges pass by.

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If you are not today's winner, Cox & Kings will still fly you to a break in Amsterdam for as little as £270 per person, with a single supplement from £70. Prices include scheduled flights, two nights' twinshare accommodation and breakfast.

For further details, phone 0171 873 5005 or write to Cox & Kings, Gordon House, 10 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1PH.

HOW TO ENTER

The winner of Saturday's competition for a trip to St Petersburg was Mr Gordon Campbell from Invergowrie, Dundee. The competition in *The Sunday Times* for a tour of northern India was won by Mr Roy Kennedy of Esher. Yesterday's competition, for a cookery course in Andalusia, was won by Mrs Kath Tobin of Colchester.

For a chance to win the Amsterdam holiday for two, ring 0839 44 45 16 before 3pm with the answers to the following questions. We will contact you later today if you are the winner.

1) In which century did Amsterdam make great wealth from overseas?

2) Which Amsterdam museum houses Dutch art from the 16th to 19th centuries?

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Cox & Kings

Tomorrow: your chance to win a holiday in Prague

Summer jumps campaign takes off

By OUR RACING STAFF

A SUMMER jumping campaign with over £500,000 in prize money was unveiled by the British Horseracing Board (BHB) yesterday.

Six courses will stage 21 National Hunt fixtures, including 13 in the evening, in June and July. Along with £502,850 in prize money, there will be £20,400 appearance money available, £16,000 sponsored championship for owners and trainers and a best-turned-out award for every race.

The six courses in the programme are Market Rasen, Perth, Southwell, Stratford, Uttoxeter and Worcester. An evening meeting starts the new season at Perth on June 8 and it ends with another evening fixture at Worcester on July 27.

The courses involved will aim to provide well-watered ground for the new venture and Richard Muddle, of Southwell, said: "It must not be watering just for a specific meeting. Courses should be aiming to keep the water table up, which involves watering earlier and more often."

Paul Greaves, racing director of the BHB, said: "This will mean we will have jump and flat racing 12 months of the year. It is a big opportunity and we know all the challenges. The six courses are very alive to it and are going to promote it vigorously."

Lee Richardson, marketing director of the BHB, added: "This is a two-year experiment and 12,000 owners, trainers

and jockeys have been contacted with details about it."

Meanwhile, Adrian Maguire put the sad events of last week behind him to make a winning return to the saddle with a double at Uttoxeter yesterday.

He partnered Greville Again, who happily held off St Helion Fairway in the Tenthren Extra Novices' Hurdle, and then collected the last race on Future King.

It was a triumphant comeback for Maguire, who missed last week's Cheltenham Festival after the death of his mother.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: CAROUSEL ROCKET (5.20 Newcastle)

Next best: Uncle Keeney (2.20 Newcastle)

mother, Maguire said: "It's nice to be back after eight days off. The longer it went on, the harder it would have been to return, my mind wouldn't have been on the job. The number of cards and messages I have received from people I've never even met has been unbelievable. It meant a lot to me."

The victory was also special for Greville Again's winning trainer, David Nicholson, who said: "That winner has given me as much pleasure as any at Cheltenham last week. I don't know who was the more emotional - him or me - but it's

nice to see him back in the winner's enclosure. Just to put Adrian back on a winner meant a lot to me."

Ian Balding, the Kingsclere trainer, is hoping that Crystal Spirit and Spinning will be able to run at Aintree next month.

Crystal Spirit, an Ascot winner, missed the Cheltenham Festival because of a slight setback, but Balding said yesterday: "Crystal Spirit is back in full work and I hope that he will be able to run in the National. There is a slight possibility that he might run at Ascot the previous week."

Spinning has not run over since the spring of 1993 as his trainer has been waiting for the ground to dry out. Balding said: "I am hopeful that Spinning will run at Aintree."

But their stable companion, Weigh Anchor, was injured in exercise on Saturday and has had to be put down.

The smart middle-distance Flat performer had recovered from an injury incurred at Royal Ascot last June and Balding had been aiming him at a race at Doncaster this week. Balding said: "He was doing some work in preparation for Doncaster on Thursday when he broke a leg."

Monsieur Le Cure, sixth in the Gold Cup behind Master Oats, will be aimed for the Martell Cup Chase at the National meeting. "He came back from Cheltenham absolutely fine," his trainer, John Edwards, reported yesterday.



Crystal Spirit, safely clearing the water at Cheltenham, heads for the National

RACING AHEAD

Robert Wright suggests the best value in the ante-post market

WILLIAM HILL LINCOLN HANDICAP

Doncaster, March 25

GUIDE TO THE LEADING PRICES

	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Castel Rosso	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Country Lover	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Knight's Ash	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Castel Choir	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Erden	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Indian Fly	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Mahood	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Master Revealed	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Moving Arrow	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Chickawicks	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Mellotie	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1

AFTER last week's top class National Hunt race at Cheltenham, the racing world turns full circle on Thursday with the Brocksby Stakes at Doncaster marking the traditional start of the flat season on turf.

It is no coincidence that the first major betting heat of the new season is bookmaker-sponsored. Saturday's William Hill Lincoln Handicap has proved a minefield for punters over the years, largely because of doubts over the effect of the draw and horses' fitness at such an early stage of the season.

However, the odds are no longer stacked so greatly against the punter. The draw appeared to be of less importance last year although a low draw remains a help while more of the field are guaranteed to be fully fit having been given pipe-openers on the all-weather.

Castel Rosso, runner-up over seven furlongs at Wolverhampton at the start of the month, has been heavily backed in recent days. He finished fourth in the race last year and should go well, but at a best-priced 10-1 the value has long gone.

The lightly-raced Knight's Ash is potentially more interesting. Michael Stoute's charge has made only seven times in his career, but won first time out last year and was subsequently made favourite for the Britannia Stakes at Royal Ascot, where he finished a fair seventh. Open to further improvement, he may be a blot on the handicap, but has shown his best form on firm ground.

A better proposition is CELESTIAL CHOIR. A confirmed runner - Joe Fanning has already been booked for the ride - he was not given a hard time when fourth, beaten two lengths, behind Knight's Ash at Wolverhampton three weeks ago. Last year's form improved throughout last season, winning five times, but remains fairly handicapped, acts on any ground and is overpriced at 16-1 with the sponsors.

NEWCASTLE

2.20 Province	3.50 Cash Chase
2.50 Toll Booth	4.20 Strong Approach
	5.40 Forbidden Time
	5.20 Zarn Bee

3.20 LEADING PROSPECT (nap)

The courses involved will aim to provide well-watered ground for the new venture and Richard Muddle, of Southwell, said: "It must not be watering just for a specific meeting. Courses should be aiming to keep the water table up, which involves watering earlier and more often."

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 11543 GOOD TIMES (10/1) (F) (M) (S) (D) (R) (H) 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No news is good news, but some is amusing

Lynne Perrie, the former *Coronation Street* actress, heads for a sofa in the Leeds studios of Yorkshire Television (YTV), wearing a cocktail dress bought in the hope that tape measures exaggerate. Perrie seems somewhat, shall we say, disconnected and there is alarm in the air, in part based on her announcement that she is fired, having just come back from the moon.

Richard Whiteley — who is to interview her — certainly thought she said the moon. It transpires that Perrie has just come back from Luton. She has splashed down in Leeds in order to plug a book, in which she relates her drinking problem, which in turn is related to the understandable strain brought about by her son having AIDS.

The interview is routine and lasts five minutes. Perrie thinks this is short, but is reassured to hear from Whiteley that some

other *Coronation Street* star only got two-and-a-half minutes. By the duration of their book plugs ye shall know them.

The programme we, the national audience, were watching last night was *Deadline* (Channel 4), it is about Yorkshire's nightly news magazine programme, *Calendar*, and it is part of that network's season, called *Whose News?*, on the makers and shapers of news in Britain and abroad. *Deadline* is to be a six-part series, which I fear may strain the concentration.

For *Calendar*, YTV rounds up the usual suspects: a missing child, the launch of the "first mainstream cheese in 50 years", a police swoop on alleged football hooligans, the Perrie book, and so on. A mix of hard news and features, reported by people well used to making bricks without straw.

In these, the backwoods of television, competent folk flash through the undergrowth with one

eye on the high plains of national news. Having witnessed at close hand the rise of Angela Rippon, Hugh Scully and Sue Lawley from the studios of BBC Plymouth, I am not about to patronise the regions.

Any fool can put together a running order for the *Nine O'Clock News*, but to make a half-cent item out of a new cheese takes iron will and a refusal to be lazy. Thus the reporter at the cheese launch, for which Annika Rice has been imported by the makers to say cheese, waves a discreet "don't bother filming" signal at the cameraman while Rice is pontificating. Annika Rice has interrupted an extraordinary new challenge, most likely on the surface of the moon (or Luton), and YTV could care less! Good for them.

Instead, the crew hits the streets to market-test the cheese and finds it has put ghastly temptation in the

path of two middle-aged women: "Actually, we're on our way to Weight Watchers."

The serious news of the night is a missing girl in Hebden Bridge, a story which illustrates the symbiotic relationship between local news organisations and the public — their viewers — and officialdom. In this case the police. There are negotiations as a result of which the camera crews keep their distance from the family when asked but get their two-minute interview later. This is uncontroversial, untaxing, but interesting.

There was a moment last night, however, when a real issue surfaced. Whiteley, who can give the impression that serious news is there to provide a break between fits of tsking, said: "The more news there is, the more it adds to the anxiety quotient of people's lives." This has a certain Birtan ring to it, but is nonetheless true.

The problem is not so much too much news as too little understanding on the part of the viewer, who sometimes fails to realise that news is by definition the exceptional. But, yes, the more news programmes there are the more that was once left uncovered gets coverage: thus are "crime waves" born.

In simpler times of yore there rose to prominence a teenaged

actress from Brooklyn called Betty Joan Perske, who was to become the object of my own teenage desires. She had made *To Have And Have Not* before I could toddle but Lauren Bacall, as she became, remains, for men of a certain age, very nearly the perfect manifestation of the female form, and by no means just physically.

That voice! That self-assurance! Her interview with Jeremy Isaacs for *Face to Face* (BBC 2) last night was magical television, the confirmation (I choose to think) that Bacall is everything one believed her to be: intelligent, sensible, utterly without self-pity or self-aggrandisement.

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This led Isaacs to father figures, but she was too smart for him.

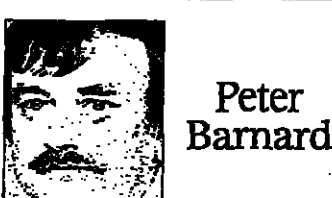
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Bacall (and Bogie) had higher values and hers survived Hollywood, perhaps because she lived there for only 15 years. And her philosophy, partly learnt from Bogart, is: "To have character, to be honest and loyal to your friends and family... basic stuff."

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REVIEW



Peter Barnard

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- BBC1**
- 6.00 Business Breakfast (58334)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (5833334)
- 9.00 *Kilroy* (s) (5838605)
- 10.00 News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (7471856) 10.05 *Standstenders — The Early Days* (i) (Ceefax) (8488898)
- 10.35 *Good Morning with Anne and Nick* (s) (7723353)
- 12.00 News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (7389444) 12.05 *Public Mill* (s) (7005957) 12.55 Regional News and weather (1533065347)
- 1.00 *One O'Clock News* (Ceefax) and weather (37792)
- 1.30 *Neighbours* (s) (77382537)
- 1.50 *Golfing for Gold*. Henry Kelly presents another round of the general knowledge quiz with European contestants (s) (77386353)
- 2.15 *Film: Perry Mason — The Case of the Musical Murder* (1988) starring Raymond Burr and Debbie Reynolds. The legal eagle defends an innocent man accused of the murder of a Broadway director. Directed by Christian I. Nyby II. (Ceefax) (206268)
- 3.50 *Jackanory* (s) (8655131) 4.00 *Willy Fog* (Ceefax) (8898228) 4.25 *Grimmy* (4306112) 4.35 *Incredible Games*. (Ceefax) (s) (1374247)
- 5.00 *Newsround* (2062131) 5.05 *Maid Marian and Her Merry Men* (i). (Ceefax) (s) (8675179)
- 5.35 *Neighbours* (i). (Ceefax) (s) (888518). Northern Ireland: Inside Ulster.
- 6.00 *Six O'Clock News* (Ceefax) and weather (711)
- 6.30 Regional news magazines (173). Northern Ireland: Neighbours.
- 7.00 *Holiday*. Reports from Orkney and Shetland, southern India and Amsterdam. (Ceefax) (s) (7228)
- 7.30 *EastEnders*. (Ceefax) (s) (247)
- 8.00 *A Question of Sport*. David Coleman, Bill Beaumont and Ian Botham are joined by Dean Saunders, Mary Thompson, Peter Baker and John Crawley. (Ceefax) (s) (8976)
- 8.30 *Brookside*. A wildlife documentary about badgers (i). (Ceefax) (8711)
- 9.00 *Nine O'Clock News* (Ceefax), regional news and weather (9421)
- BBC2**
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- CARTLTON**
- 6.00 *GMTV* (7437841)
- 9.25 *Chain Letters* (s) (3872773) 9.55 *London Today* (Teletext) and weather (8476044)
- 10.00 *The Time... the Place* (s) (7601624)
- 10.35 *This Morning*. Weekly magazine (2616895) 12.20 *London Today* (Teletext) and weather (1255228)
- 12.30 *News* (Teletext) and weather (2707711)
- 12.55 *Emmerdale*. (i). (Teletext) (2782402) 1.25 *Home and Away*. Australian family drama serial. (Teletext) (57068518)
- 1.55 *Vanessa*. Discussion series on women's issues. (Teletext) (s) (3558711) 2.25 *A Country Practice*. Medical drama set in the Australian outback. (s) (7433792) 2.50 *Blue Heelers*. Rural Australia police drama. (7854266)
- 3.20 *ITN News* headlines. (Teletext) (8683605)
- 3.25 *London Today* (Teletext) and weather (8682976)
- 3.30 *The Magic House* (s) (2757995) 3.40 *Tots TV* (i) (s) (8651315) 3.50 *Twinkle the Dream Bel* (i) (s) (8657599) 4.00 *Bugle the Little Helicopter* (8779315) 4.15 *The Dreamstones*. (Teletext) (s) (8657402) 4.40 *Chris Cross*. (Teletext) (s) (8638889)
- 5.10 *After 5 with Carol Keating*. (Teletext) (8689518)
- 5.40 *News* (Teletext) and weather (110112)
- 5.55 *Your Show*. Viewers' video soapbox (529650)
- 6.00 *Home and Away* (i). (Teletext) (179)
- 6.30 *London Tonight*. (Teletext) (131)
- 7.00 *Emmerdale*. (Teletext) (5824)
- 7.30 *Saint and Greavsie's World of Sport*. Ian John and Jimmy Greaves with classic sporting moments from the early 1970s (s) (315)
- 8.00 *The Bill*. Quits. Stamp makes Slater the laughing stock of Sun Hill. (Teletext) (1044)
- 8.30 *September Song*. Last in the drama series starring Russ Abbot, Michael Williams and Diana Quick. (Teletext) (s) (7078)
- 9.00 *Peak Practice*. A sporting accident throws Will and Sarah together. (Teletext) (s) (7315)
- 10.00 *News at Ten* (Teletext) and weather (86537) 10.30 *London Tonight* (Teletext) and weather (825179)
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- CHANNEL 4**
- 6.35 *Spiff and Hercules* (2702082)
- 7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (27315)
- 9.00 *You Bet Your Life*. Trivia game show for couples (i) (s) (45866)
- 9.30 *Schools*. Eureka! (1000) Fourways Farm (7488976) 10.10 *Maths Everywhere* (1526792) 10.25 *Time Capsule* (1512599) 10.45 *Coming Together* (4542800) 11.00 *Science in Focus* (2072173) 11.22 *Stage One* (s) (743559) 11.38 *Schools at Work* (5754841) 11.45 *First Edition* (4705266)
- 12.00 *House to House* (58150)
- 12.30 *Seamus Street*. The quest is the singer Marilyn Horne (34711) 1.30 *Widgit* (i) (s) (35559334)
- 1.55 *10 Minute Mozart*. A 1930 Reniger silhouette illustration of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and *Coel Fan Turle* (25977011)
- 2.10 *Film: Wing and a Prayer* (1944, b/w) starring Don Ameche and Dana Andrews. Second World War drama about the events leading up to the Battle of Midway in the Pacific. Directed by Henry Hathaway (567745)
- 3.55 *Food*

Venables lets Ince rest his England case

Schools set fierce pace in Rosslyn Park sevens



Wright seeks payment for earnings loss

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Hilditch and David McHugh as their referees for the tournament.

Seles overshadows Spaniard's exit

Results, page 36

Salim free to play during inquiry

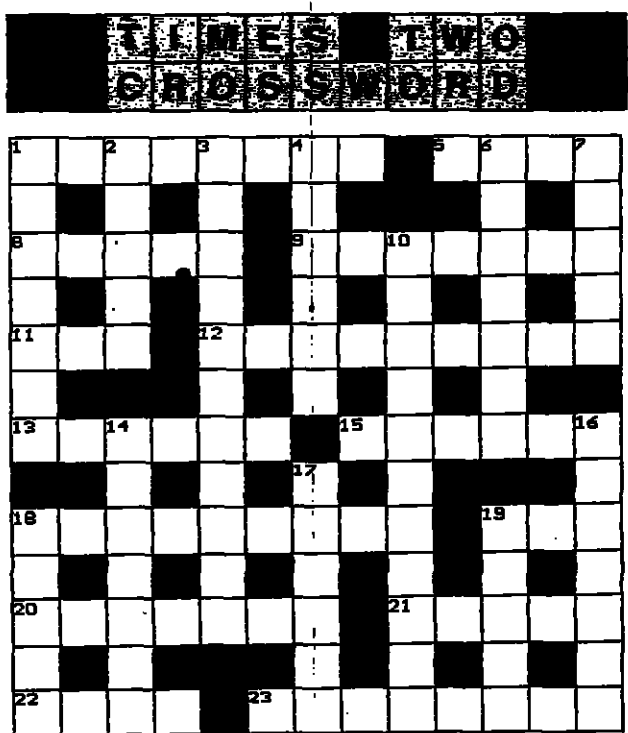


several weeks, as Australia's leading players are touring the Caribbean until mid-May. This leaves Pakistan with the delicate decision as to whether to select Salim for the Asia Cup in Sharjah next month. It was also announced yesterday that the Test and

A working party of players' and board representatives will continue to meet to discuss various possible enhanced benefits for established county cricketers. "The working party acknowledge that the 1996 minimum wage proposals will be the first to be negotiated following the conclusion of the new broadcasting contracts," a

It killed Hitler

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